

Medical Daily

Flint, Michigan Family Sues City After Water Contamination Causes Toddler's Lead Poisoning

February 9, 2016 5:00 PM By Ali Venosa



Sophia Rodriguez Waid had dangerously high levels of lead in her blood, thanks to Flint water. Facebook

A Flint, Michigan couple is suing city, state, and government officials after their 2-year-old daughter tested positive for lead poisoning, and say the city lied to its residents and put children, like their daughter Sophia, in harm's way.

NBC News reports Luke Waid and his fiancée Michelle Rodriguez were first informed about their daughter's high lead levels at her 1-year checkup.

Doctors told the family to get rid of lead in their home, and Waid didn't suspect the water at first, since it had been tested when he bought the house. That test, however, had been done when Flint was buying water from Detroit.

Just three months before Sophia's blood test, the city began using water from the Flint River to save money. The water was more corrosive, and ate away at lead service lines, resulting in heavy metals being released into the drinking water.

"We changed our whole life," Waid told NBC. "We remodeled our home and lived in hotels and with family for months."

The family was still living in Flint, though, and Sophia's lead level didn't decrease. It went up further still, hitting 14 micrograms/dl, much higher than the 5 micrograms/dl the CDC says requires public health action. After being threatened with child protective health services if Sophia's levels didn't decrease, the family moved into Rodriguez's sister's house, which had its own well. Sophia began to improve.

The damage has already been done, according to the family's lawyers, Brian McKeen, and two New York-based lawyers. It could be years before the family knows how much damage the lead did to their daughter. In addition, Rodriguez had been drinking Flint water throughout her second pregnancy — Luke Jr. is 2 months old now, and the family is waiting for his blood to be tested.

"This family has literally gone through hell," said one of the attorneys, Hunter Shkolnik. "They literally abandoned their house. This young family almost lost their child over this. This is as tragic an event as I have seen."