

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER**

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***[INSERT NAME OF WATER SYSTEM] found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes / buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.***

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## **HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD**

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

## **SOURCES OF LEAD**

Lead is a common, natural, toxic, and often useful metal that was used for years in products found around the home. It can be found throughout the environment in lead-based paint, air, soil, household dust, food,

and certain types of pottery, porcelain, and pewter. It can also be found in water.

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome plated brass faucets, and, in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect your house to the water main (service lines). Some common causes of corrosion are dissolved oxygen, acidity (low pH), and low mineral content in the water. In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing more than 0.2% lead and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes, and other plumbing materials to not more than 8.0%.

When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your

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drinking water. This means the first draw from the faucet in the morning, or later in the afternoon after returning from work or school, can contain fairly high levels of lead.

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formulas and concentrated juices that are mixed with water.

Other important sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint, soil, and household dust. Homes built prior to 1978 may have lead-based paint both inside and outside of the house. Ingestion of lead-based paint chips is frequently a cause of lead exposure in young children. Soil and household dust may also contain deteriorating lead-based paint.

## **STEPS THE CONSUMER CAN TAKE TO REDUCE THEIR EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

To reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water, the following precautions should be considered and taken.

Let the water run from the faucet before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in a faucet has gone unused for more

than six hours. The longer water resides in your home or building's plumbing, the more lead it may contain. Flushing the faucet means running the cold water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 30 seconds to 2 minutes. If your house or building has a lead service line to the water main, you may have to flush the water for a longer time. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of your home or building's plumbing system, you still need to flush water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing faucet water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to reduce lead exposure. To conserve water, fill a couple of bottles for drinking water after flushing the faucet, and wherever possible use the first flush to wash dishes or water the plants.

Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve more lead in less time than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and heat it on the stove or microwave. Do not prepare baby formula with water from the hot water tap.

Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead levels.

Periodically remove the strainers from faucets and flush by

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running water for 3 to 5 minutes to remove any loose lead solder or debris that has accumulated over time.

Determine whether or not the service line that connects your home or building to the water main is made of lead. The best way to determine if your service line is made of lead is by hiring a licensed plumber to inspect the line. A licensed plumber can at the same time check to see if your home or building's plumbing contains lead solder, lead pipes, or pipe fittings that contain lead. The public water system that delivers water to your home should maintain records of the materials located in the distribution system. If the service line that connects your house to the water main contributes more than 15 micrograms per liter lead to drinking water, after our comprehensive treatment program is in place, we are required to replace the portion of the line we own. If the line is only partially owned by the public water system, we are required to provide the owner of the privately-owned portion of the line with information on how to replace the privately-owned portion of the service line, and offer to replace that portion of the line at the owner's expense. If we replace that portion of the line that we own, we also are required to notify you in advance and provide you with information

on the steps you can take to minimize exposure to any temporary increase in lead levels that may result from the partial replacement, to take a follow-up sample at our expense from the line within 72 hours after partial replacement, and to mail or otherwise provide you the results of that sample within three business days of receiving the results. Acceptable replacement alternatives include copper, steel, iron, and plastic pipes.

Have an electrician check your wiring. If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electrical code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. DO NOT attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards.

Parents may want to have your child's blood tested for lead by your family doctor or pediatrician and they can provide you information about the health effects of lead.

Despite our best efforts to control water corrosivity and remove lead from the water supply, lead levels in some homes or buildings can be high. To find out whether you need to take action in your home, have your drinking water tested to

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determine if it contains excessive concentrations of lead. Testing is essential because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water. The following is a list of some Ohio EPA approved laboratories in your area that you can call to have your water tested for lead.

**[INSERT NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS OF AT LEAST TWO LABORATORIES]**

The steps described above will reduce the lead concentrations in your drinking water. However, if a water test indicates that the drinking water coming from your faucet contains lead concentrations in excess of 15 micrograms per liter after flushing, or after we have completed our actions to minimize levels, then you may want to take any of the following additional measures.

Purchase or lease a home treatment device. Home treatment devices are limited in that each unit treats only water that flows from the faucet(s) to which it is connected, and all of the devices require periodic maintenance and replacement. Counter top devices such as reverse osmosis systems installed on the faucet or distillers can effectively remove lead from your drinking water. Some activated carbon filters may reduce lead levels at the faucet; however, all lead

reduction claims should be investigated. Be sure to check the actual performance of a specific home treatment device before and after installing the unit.

Purchase bottled water for drinking and cooking.

## **WHAT IS THE PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM DOING TO REDUCE THE LEAD LEVELS IN HOMES AND BUILDINGS IN THIS AREA**

**[INSERT REASON WHY THERE ARE ELEVATED LEVELS OF LEAD IN THE SYSTEM'S DRINKING WATER (IF KNOWN) AND WHAT THE SYSTEM IS DOING TO REDUCE THE LEAD LEVELS]**

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For more information call us at **[INSERT YOUR NUMBER]****[(IF APPLICABLE)]**, or visit our Web site at **[INSERT YOUR WEB SITE HERE]**. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home or building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your health care provider.