STAYING INFORMED ABOUT LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Sources of Lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry.

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows pipes, fittings, and fixtures with up to .25 percent weighted average of lead to be identified as "lead-free."

The water from Humboldt Industrial Park water system does not have any lead in its source water or water mains in the roads. When water is in contact with pipes or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Buildings built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes or lead solder.

EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water. Don't forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

Health Effects of Lead

Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney, or nervous system problems.

STEPS TO TAKE TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSE TO LEAD IN YOUR WATER

Run your water to flush out lead. Run water for 15-30 seconds to flush lead from interior plumbing (run water for 5 minutes if you have a lead service line or any lead pipes in your home plumbing) or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if the water hasn't been used for several hours.

Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula. Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.

Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water does not reduce lead.

Look for alternative sources or treatment of water. You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality.

Test your water for lead. Call us at 570-455-1508 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.

Get your child's blood tested. Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.

Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead. Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law previously allowed end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free." As of January 4, 2014, end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, fittings, and valves, must meet the new "lead-free" definition of having no more than 0.25 percent lead on a weighted average.

Visit **https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P100LVYK.txt** to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures and how to identify lead-free certification marks on new fixtures.

For More Information

Call us at 570-455-1508. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at ***www.epa.gov/lead*** *or contact your health care provider.*

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