

Reducing Children's Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water

As a provider of childcare services for Minnesota's children, you value their healthy development. Awareness of environmental concerns and actions that you can take to reduce adverse effects can help make a quality childcare experience.

Lead is a toxic metal commonly found in air, soil, dust, food, drinking water, and in products such as lead based paint. Lead is harmful to human health when ingested or inhaled. Small levels of lead can build up over time and cause health risks. There is no known beneficial purpose for lead in the body. The current scientific consensus is that there is no safe level of lead exposure.

This information sheet provides general information about reducing lead in drinking water.

How does Lead get into Drinking Water?

Our body needs water to function properly and drinking water is a vital part of our daily diet. Reducing levels of lead in drinking water is an important part of reducing the overall exposure to lead.

Lead generally enters drinking water through corrosion of household plumbing and is usually not found in the source of water. All homes regardless of their age may have plumbing that contains lead. Sources of lead in household plumbing may include lead service lines, lead solder joints and brass. Brass can be found in faucets and valves. Lead can be found in components used in well construction. If a lead source is present, water that is unused and remains in the plumbing for a long time may contain higher levels of lead. There are many things we can do to reduce exposure to lead. This is especially important when serving sensitive groups like children.



At a Glance

Risks to Children

Infants and children absorb lead at higher rates than adults.

Exposure to low levels of lead can cause:

- Lower IQ's
- Hearing impairments
- Reduced attention span
- Hyperactivity
- Developmental delays
- Poor classroom performance

Lead Exposure

Children may be exposed to lead found in air, soil, paint, dust, food, drinking water, and other products-

- When children put their hands or objects in their mouths, putting them at risk for swallowing lead dust.
- Infants may also be exposed to lead if they are drinking formula made with water with lead in it.

How to Protect Yourself and Your Family

You may be in contact with lead through paint, water, dust, soil, food, hobbies, or your job. Visit [Lead Poisoning Prevention: Common Sources \(http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/lead/sources.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/lead/sources.html) to learn about how to reduce your contact with lead from sources other than your drinking water. Lead can get in your drinking water as it passes through your household plumbing system. Learn how you can protect yourself from lead in your drinking water:

1. Let the water run
2. Use cold water
3. Test your water
4. Treat your water

For more details [Lead in Drinking Water \(http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/contaminants/lead.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/contaminants/lead.html)

Routine Maintenance

- Aerators at the end of faucets have small screens that can trap sediments containing lead. These can usually be easily unscrewed, cleaned, and replaced.
- If you use a filter, be sure to replace it according to the manufacturer's instructions. Improper care of filters and other point-of-use devices can cause lead levels to increase.



Steps You Can Take

Remove Lead in the Plumbing System

Materials that contain lead such as solder joints, fixtures, faucets, and piping may be replaced with lead-free materials by a licensed plumber.

Point-of-Use Water Treatment Device

Filters and other point-of-use devices may be used to remove lead. It is strongly encouraged these devices are approved to meet NSF Standard 53, NSF Standard 58 or the equivalent.

Use Bottled Water

Commercially prepared bottled water that meets federal and state drinking water standards may be used.

For More Information

Drinking Water Protection Section
P.O. Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
651-201-4700
health.drinking_water@state.mn.us

[Drinking Water Protection \(http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/index.html)

[Lead \(http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/lead/\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/lead/)

Commissioners Model Plan
[Reducing Lead in Drinking Water: A Technical Guidance and Model Plan for Minnesota's Public Schools \(http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/schools/pbschoolguide.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/schools/pbschoolguide.pdf)