

Fact Sheet

LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Page County Middle/High School 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.

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 metal found in the environment that has been in many consumer products but is now known to be harmful to human health if ingested or inhaled. 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). Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead. Lead is rarely found in natural sources of water such as rivers, lakes, wells or springs.

New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The Safe Drinking Water Act defines "lead free" as no more than 0.2 percent lead when used with respect to solder and flux; and no more than 0.25 percent for pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, and fixtures based on a weighted average of the wetted surfaces. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

The source of water from our well does not contain lead. When water is in contact with pipes (or service lines) or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New homes may also have lead; even "lead-free" plumbing may contain some lead.

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.

Steps You Can Take To Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Your Water

Lead may work its way into drinking water after the water entered the distribution system and is on its way to consumers taps. This usually happens through the corrosion of materials containing lead in household plumbing. These materials include brass faucets, lead solder on copper pipes, lead pipes, or lead service lines connecting the water main to the inside plumbing. Lead pipes are no longer installed for service lines or in household plumbing and lead solder has been outlawed in Virginia since 1985. If you live in a building in which the inside plumbing contains lead-based materials, there are several steps you can take to reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water. These include:

1. **Run your water to flush out lead.** If water hasn't been used for several hours, allow the water to run at the tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using it for drinking or cooking. This action flushes the lead-containing water from the pipes. The water you run from drinking water taps does not have to be wasted. You can use this water for cleaning purposes or for watering plants. You may want to keep a container of drinking water in your refrigerator, so you don't have to run water every time you need it. Visit the National Sanitation Foundation Web site at www.nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures
2. **Use water from the cold water tap for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily in hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
3. **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce or remove lead.
4. **Get your child tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child's blood tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.

What Happened? What is Being Done?

The history of lead and copper testing at Page County Middle/High School shows that the lead and copper action levels have never been exceeded before. Currently the faucets showing elevated lead levels have been turned off and will be tested for several parameters.

*We will be providing bottled water at each facility.

For More Information

Call us at (540) 743-6533 or visit our Website at <https://www.pagecounty.k12.va.us/>. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead:

1. Visit EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/lead>;
2. Contact your health care provider;
3. Contact the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD; or
4. Contact the Page County Local Health Department.

This notice is brought to you by the Page County Middle/High School Waterworks. State Water System ID# 2139475.

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