



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 27, 2019
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route To: School Staff, Principals, Buildings and Grounds Staff, Parents and School Community Stakeholders
From: Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

Resources for School Districts on Testing for Lead in Drinking Water

Understanding that lead in drinking water continues to be an issue within local school communities, the New Jersey Department of Education, working in collaboration with the state Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Protection, has created a back-to-school package of resources for school districts to use regarding testing for lead in school drinking water and educating families on prevention, screening, and intervention related to lead exposure.

Resources Schools Can Share with the Community

School districts, charter schools and renaissance school projects may want to share the following resources with local stakeholders, either through emails, posting on school websites, district social media outlets, or other communications avenues. Families should also be encouraged to remember that this information should also be applied to children who are not yet of school age given screening recommendations begin at age 1.

- The NJ Department of Health's Childhood Lead [webpage](#) includes fact sheets regarding [lead and drinking water](#), lead in drinking water at schools and child care centers (available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)), [preventing lead poisoning](#), [testing for lead exposure](#), and other resources.
- The NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Lead [webpage](#) includes FAQs about lead in drinking water, steps consumers can take to reduce exposure from lead in drinking water, and other resources. Customers can check New Jersey [Drinking Water Watch](#), which is an online resource enabling users to view drinking water information for New Jersey water systems.
- The NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Assistance & Health Services, has established a Lead Poisoning Prevention Resource [site](#) to share informational materials created (in multiple languages) to explain how children ages 6 and younger get lead poisoning, how it harms a child's health, and how to prevent it.
- The Murphy Administration and the NJ Poison Control Center have [established](#) a 24/7 Health Hotline for residents with questions and concerns about the health effects of lead exposure. The phone number for the Health Hotline is 1-866-448-2432. Calls to the Health Hotline are answered 24/7 by trained medical professionals – doctors, nurses, and pharmacists. Assistance is available in 150 languages.
- The Department of Health has renewed its #kNOwLEAD public education campaign to increase awareness of all lead hazards including lead-based paint in homes built before 1978, leaded pipes and imported goods such as certain spices, ceramic pottery, and some herbal remedies and folk medicine. #kNOwLEAD educational posters are available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Hindi](#).
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Food and Nutrition Services, provides fact sheets and other helpful information regarding [Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#), [Federal Nutrition Programs: Reducing the Impact of Lead Exposure](#), and [Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities](#).

- Concerned families can also focus on giving their children healthy foods – with calcium, iron, and Vitamin C – that may prevent lead from being absorbed into the body. Milk, yogurt, cheese, and leafy vegetables like spinach offer calcium. Lean meats, beans, peanut butter, and cereals provide iron. Oranges, green, and red peppers are a good source of Vitamin C, as well as juices with Vitamin C, such as orange, tomato, and grapefruit. For information regarding nutrition assistance services available for low-income families, pregnant women, infants and children under five years old, and others who may be eligible, please see The New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for [Women Infants and Children](#) and [New Jersey's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#).
- The NJ Department of Human Services encourages anyone who is feeling stressed or anxious to call New Jersey Mental Health Cares at (877) 294-HELP (4357). A TTY line is available for the deaf and hearing impaired at (877) 294-4356.
- The NJ Department of Human Services encourages anyone whose child needs health insurance coverage to visit [NJFamilyCare](#) to learn if you are eligible for free or reduced cost coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Information on New Jersey's Lead Testing and Remediation Efforts

School districts and other school officials may wish to provide to parents and other community stakeholders information on requirements established by the State of New Jersey. The state's lead-testing program, which was implemented by regulations adopted by the Department of Education in 2016, call for:

- Testing for lead in all drinking water outlets used for human consumption or food preparation was required within the first year of implementation of the Department of Education regulations, which went into effect July 13, 2016.
- All public schools are required to test for lead in drinking water every six years.
- All school districts annually provide to the Department of Education a Statement of Assurance that attests they have complied with state regulations.
- Each district must make all test results available at the school facility and on the district's website.
- Any drinking water outlet that tests above the action level must be immediately taken out of service.
- Regulations also require notification to the NJDOE, as well as to parents, of any results that exceed the permissible level. The notification should describe the steps taken to immediately end the use of each drinking water outlet where water quality exceeds the permissible level, the measures taken to ensure that alternate drinking water has been made available to all students and staff, and information regarding the health effects of lead

It is important to note that the Department of Education reports that all districts and charter schools are in compliance with current state regulations, having either submitted a Statement of Assurance, submitted a Reimbursement Request containing a Statement of Assurance, or received an exemption from testing for no water use. These Statements of Assurance affirm that the district will continue to fully implement the Department's testing for lead in school drinking water regulations.

In addition, with the passage of the Securing Our Children's Future Act, the State of New Jersey is currently transitioning from a program specifically focused on lead *testing* to one that also focuses on lead *remediation*. The Department of Education is working on a program to announce how lead-remediation funding will be implemented. Details are expected to be announced in the near future.

Tools and Reminders for Districts

The Department of Education and the Department of Environmental Protection have made available a number of resources, tools and reminders available to local school-district staff who are entrusted with oversight and implementation of the local lead-testing program.

Resources and reminders include:

- [NJDOE's lead-testing webpage](#)
- [Guidance materials for schools from the DEP](#)
- [Reminder to make lead-testing results available on school website](#)
- [Reminder to districts on submitting Statements of Assurance](#)

For information on compliance with state regulations, contact the NJDOE at leadtesting@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group