

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Old Forge Elementary found elevated levels of lead in a non-consumption sink in the building. 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. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Drinking water is also a possible source of lead exposure. Most sources of drinking water have no lead or very low levels of lead. Most lead gets into drinking water when the water comes into contact with plumbing materials containing lead. These include lead pipes, lead solder (commonly used until 1986), and brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free." 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 drinking water.

1. **Run your water to flush out the lead.** If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 15 – 30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking.
2. **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Lead dissolves more easily into hot water.
3. **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead levels.
4. **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.
5. **Test your water for lead.** Call us at [insert phone number for your water system] to find out how to get your water tested for lead. [Include information on your water system's testing program. For example, do you provide free testing? Are there laboratories in your area that are certified to do lead in water testing?]
6. (If applicable i.e. facilities that are schools or day care centers) **Get your child 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.

One sample from September of 2019 was above the action level of 15 ppb. This outlet is not considered a consumption sink and will have its fixture changed and retested. Bottled water is provided throughout the building for consumption.

Additional water sampling will occur to determine where the source of lead is coming from.

For more information, call us at 301-766-2864. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/lead or contact your healthcare provider.