

Parents/Guardians,

We are writing to inform you of recent drinking water test results. Schools that receive drinking water from public utilities are required to test all drinking water outlets for lead every three years. The test results from this year show that we have drinking water outlets that have a level of lead that exceeds the action level. After receiving results, the outlets have been closed until remediation.

Please see the attachment for the results and description of the location of the outlets. The attachment also includes information on the health effects of lead and how you can reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water.

After remediation, the outlets will only be placed back in service if follow-up water samples show the level of lead is below the action level. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact **Matt Burton, WCPS Project Manager, in the Maintenance & Operations office at 301-766-2864.**

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## **Lead in Drinking Water – Public and Nonpublic Schools**

*Updated in response to legislation effective as of June 1, 2021*

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE: ELEVATED LEAD WATER SAMPLE RESULTS** ***Western Heights Middle School***

#### **ELEVATED LEAD WATER SAMPLE RESULT(S)**

All Maryland public and nonpublic schools are required to sample all drinking water outlets for the presence of lead pursuant to the Code of Maryland Regulations. On **10/27/21**, **18** lead water samples were collected from consumption outlets at **Western Heights Middle School**. Of these lead water samples, **2** had levels of lead exceeding the State's revised action level of 5 parts per billion (ppb) (*formerly 20 ppb; 5 ppb effective June 1, 2021*) for lead in drinking water in school buildings. The elevated lead results from the sample(s) collected at **Western Heights Middle School** were as follows:

- 6** parts per billion (ppb) **Water fountain in girls locker room**
- 11** parts per billion (ppb) **Sink in the exam room of the Health Office**

#### **ACTION LEVEL (AL)**

Effective June 1, 2021, the State's AL for lead in drinking water samples collected from outlets in school buildings has been lowered to 5 ppb. The AL is the concentration of lead which, if exceeded, triggers required remediation of drinking water outlets.

#### **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. Lead is stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the fetus receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development. 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.

## **SOURCES OF HUMAN EXPOSURE TO LEAD**

There are many different sources of human exposure to lead. These sources include: lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust or soil, some plumbing materials, certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics, exposure in the workplace and exposure from certain hobbies, brass faucets, fittings, and valves. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water, while for an infant consuming formula mixed with lead-containing water this may increase to 40 to 60 percent.

## **IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TAKEN**

**The school was notified immediately after results were received 2/22/22 and access was blocked to both outlets. The water fountain will be out of service until it can be replaced and the sink in the Health Office will remain open with a sign that states, "for hand washing only" since it is under constant supervision.**

## **NEXT STEPS**

**The water fountain will be replaced with a new model and the sink will have its faucet and associated plumbing replaced. Neither will be placed back in service unless post-remediation results show the level of lead to be under the action level.**

## **TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER:**

1. Run your water to flush out lead: If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 15 to 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 from the plumbing dissolves more easily into hot water.

*Please note that boiling the water will not reduce lead levels.*

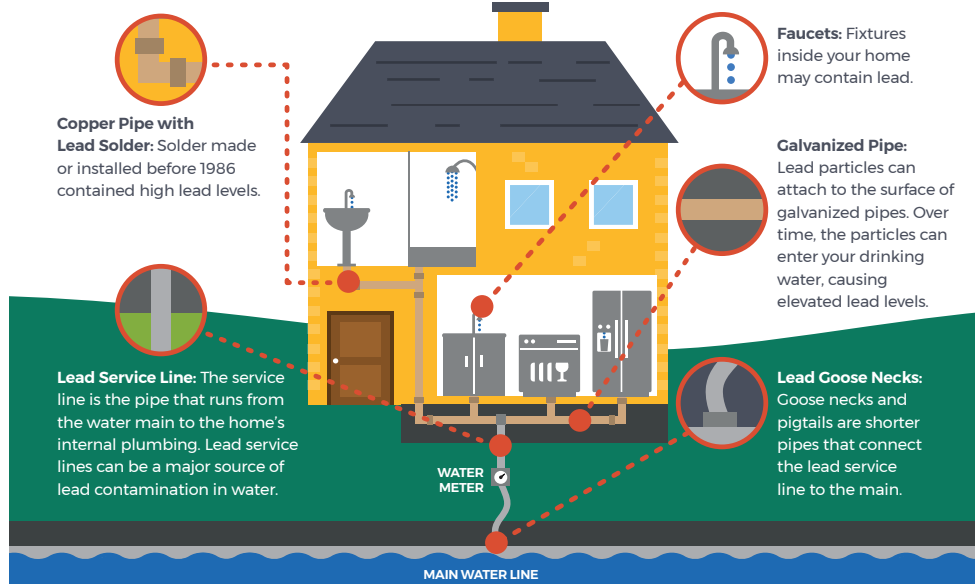
## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For additional information, please contact **Matt Burton, WCPS Project Manager, in The Maintenance & Operations Office at 301-766-2864**. For additional information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead). If you are concerned about exposure; contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead.



CONCERNED ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER?

# Sources of LEAD in Drinking Water



## Reduce Your Exposure To Lead



Use only cold water for drinking, cooking and making baby formula. *Boiling water does not remove lead from water.*



Regularly clean your faucet's screen (also known as an aerator).



Consider using a water filter certified to remove lead and know when it's time to replace the filter.



Before drinking, flush your pipes by running your tap, taking a shower, doing laundry or a load of dishes.

To find out for certain if you have lead in drinking water, **have your water tested.**

## Replace Your Lead Service Line



Water systems are required to replace lead service lines if a water system cannot meet EPA's Lead Action Level through optimized corrosion control treatment.

Replacement of the lead service line is often the responsibility of both the utility and homeowner.

Homeowners can contact their water system to learn about how to remove the lead service line.

## Identify Other Lead Sources In Your Home

Lead in homes can also come from sources other than water. If you live in a home built before 1978, you may want to have your paint tested for lead. **Consider contacting your doctor to have your children tested if you are concerned about lead exposure.**



For more information, visit: [epa.gov/safewater](http://epa.gov/safewater)