

Lead in Drinking Water

Q: What do I need to know about lead in my drinking water?

- You cannot see, taste or smell lead in drinking water.
- Boiling water will not remove the lead.
- Pipes that bring water into your home and pipes, solder, fittings and fixtures in your house may contain lead.
- When water comes into contact with pipes, solder, fittings, or fixtures that contain lead, the lead can be dissolved into the water.
- Lead-free and low-lead pipes, solder, fittings, and fixtures may still contain some lead.
- Brass and bronze pipes and fittings, brass and chrome faucets, and plastic faucets may contain lead.

Q: What are the health effects of lead?

- Lead can cause serious health problems for all ages, but it is especially dangerous for pregnant/nursing women and children.
- Because lead can be transmitted across the placenta and in breastmilk, it can be a danger to fetuses and nursing babies.
- It can be indirectly dangerous to a pregnant mother if a miscarriage results.
- Lead can cause damage to the brain and kidneys.
- Lead can interfere with the production of red blood cells and interfere with transport of oxygen in the body.
- 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 more affected by low levels of lead than healthy adults.
- A simple blood test can detect high levels of lead in the body. If you are concerned, consult a physician for advice on testing.

Q: How can I reduce my exposure to lead in drinking water?

- When you make baby formula, baby food or any other types of food/drink (for any age) do not use water from the hot water faucet.
- If you need cold or hot water for drinking, cooking or preparing baby formula, let the cold water faucet run for 15-30 seconds, especially if the faucet has gone unused for several hours. Then heat it on the stove or in the microwave, if needed.
- If lead pipes bring water to your house, flush the water for several minutes before drinking.
- If possible, have the lines replaced with metal free plumbing.
- Consider connecting to a local public water supply, where feasible. Public water systems are required to conduct periodic testing and have processes in place to remove such elements.



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- To remove loose lead solder and debris from the plumbing materials installed in newly constructed homes or homes where the plumbing has recently been replaced, remove faucet strainers and run the water for 3 to 5 minutes. Periodically remove strainers from all homes and flush out the debris that has accumulated.
- You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. If you purchase a water filter, make sure the filter is approved to reduce lead. Additionally, you can contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or visit www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters.

Q: Can I have my home tested for lead?

Yes! Contact DEQ's State Environmental Laboratory at (405) 702-1000 or (866) 412-3057.

Q: Where can I get more information?

For more information about reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at <https://go.usa.gov/xQrzzr> or contact your health care provider.