Sources of Lead

Common sources of lead exposure include:

- Lead based paint (banned since 1978).
- Lead contaminated dust or soil.
- Some lead and copper plumbing materials, particularly prior to 1986, and brass fixtures prior to 2014.
- Certain types of pottery, pewter, jewelry and cosmetics.

Water Quality Information

The USEPA action level for lead in water is 15 parts per billion. In the last testing period, the highest level detected in a Columbus water service area home was 3.4 parts per billion, far below the level allowed. Columbus continues to be in compliance with all state and federal requirements on lead in drinking water, including the Lead and Copper Rule. For more information about water quality, please see the Consumer Confidence Report at columbus.gov/ccr or call the Columbus Water Quality Assurance Lab at 614-645-7691.

Home Water Treatment Systems

If you are considering a home water treatment device, research the product to ensure it does what you intend it to do. These devices have limitations and require periodic maintenance and replacement. Reverse osmosis and distillers can effectively remove lead from drinking water. Some filters may be effective as well. However, all lead reduction product claims should be verified. It should be noted that water softeners have little or no effect on lead reduction.

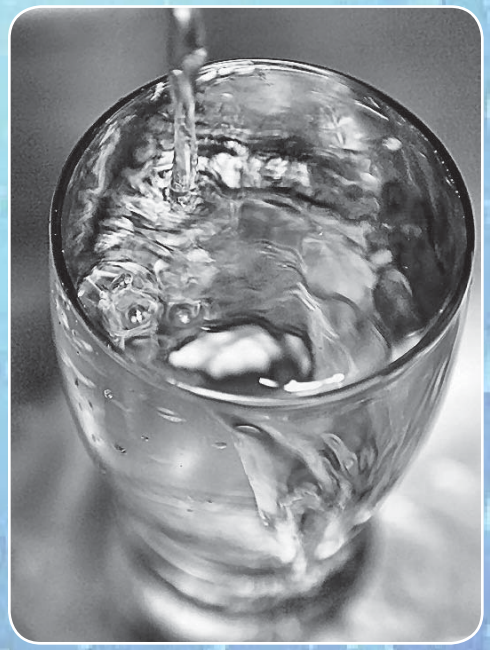
Resources Available

- Columbus Public Health offers services to eliminate exposure to lead at columbus.gov/publichealth/programs/Healthy-Homes or call 614-645-8191.
- The USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline provides information about drinking water programs authorized under the Safe Drinking Water Act at 800-426-4791 or epa.gov/safewater/lead.
- To determine if your home has a city lead service line, visit https://www.columbus.gov/utilities/water-protection/wqal/Lead-in-Drinking-Water/ or call the Water Quality Assurance Lab, 614-645-7691.
- Request a copy of the building permit for your home to learn the name of the builder of your home. The contractors may have a record of the plumbing materials used. Columbus residents may call 614-645-7314.
- Ohio EPA has a list of certified labs that test for lead in water. Call 614-644-2752 or visit epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/labcert.
- Other resources: Drinktap.org and NSF International, 800-NSF-8010, or nsf.org.

Regardless of what plumbing materials your home has, the most effective way to limit exposure to lead in drinking water is to flush the tap for at least 30 seconds if the water has not been used for six hours or more.

Fall 2017

TIPS TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN WATER



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC UTILITIES

How Can Lead Affect My Health?

All U.S. water operators are required to comply with federal Safe Drinking Water Act regulations including the Lead and Copper Rule. Lead is a common, natural metal found throughout the environment and is used in many commercial products. Exposure to lead can be harmful. A build-up of lead in the body can cause damage to the brain or kidneys, or interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of the body. The greatest risk is to infants, young children and pregnant women.

Your doctor can perform a blood test to determine if you or your child have been exposed to lead. Columbus Public Health's Lead Poisoning Prevention program also offers lead testing and medical follow-up services for children in Columbus and Worthington. Call 614-724-6000 or visit columbus.gov/publichealth/programs/Lead-Poisoning-Prevention for more information.

Is There Lead in Columbus Water?

There is no detectable lead in:

- The water pulled from the reserviors and wells that supply drinking water to 1.2 million people in central Ohio.
- The treated water that leaves the city's three drinking water plants.
- The water delivered to your home through the distribution system.

How Can Lead Get in Drinking Water?

Some water service lines, home plumbing (pipes, fittings, solder) and plumbing fixtures contain lead. As water sits in household plumbing over long periods of time, such as overnight or during work and school hours, lead can leach into the water. To prevent lead from getting into tap water from home plumbing, any time the water has not been used for more than six hours, run the tap for at least 30 seconds to flush the pipes before use. You'll know you have fresh water from the city's mainline when you notice it's colder.

Know Your Plumbing

- Homes built prior to the mid-1950s may still have a lead service line, unless the water service line has been replaced.
- Homes built prior to 1987 may have copper pipe with lead solder.
- Plumbing fixtures (like faucets) made prior to 2014 may contain up to 8% lead.

Reducing Corrosion in City Waterlines

Columbus has a very effective program that protects pipes from corrosion. Certified water operators adjust the water's chemistry (pH) and add zinc orthophosphate to the treated water. The treatment process makes the water less corrosive and creates a coating inside the pipes to serve as a barrier between the pipes and water. This prevents conditions that can cause the lead to leach.

As required by the Ohio EPA, 50 homes in Columbus are tested to ensure that the corrosion protection program continues to perform well. In addition, various sites are voluntarily tested monthly for lead, and the finished water at our three water plants is tested regularly for corrosivity.

Ways to Reduce Lead in Your Water

1. **Run the tap to flush your pipes.**

   The most effective way to reduce exposure to lead is to run the tap for at least 30 seconds if you haven't used it for six hours or more.

2. **Clean your faucet aerator.**

   Lead particles from pipes, fittings or solder can get trapped in your faucet aerator. Remove and clean aerators every few months. The aerator is the removable screen on the end of your faucet.

3. **Use cold water for cooking and drinking.**

   Lead dissolves more easily in hot water. Use only cold water for cooking, drinking or making baby formula. Boiling water does not remove lead. Flushing hot water tanks periodically is advisable.

4. **Know how your home is wired.**

   A grounding wire attached to pipes may cause materials to corrode more. Check with a licensed electrician to see if there is another location for this wire.

5. **Have your home tap water tested.**

   Contact the Ohio EPA for a list of certified labs that test for lead in water. Call 614-644-2752 or visit epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/labcert.