How Can Lead Affect My Health?

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.

Home Water Treatment Systems

If you are considering a home water treatment device, it is important that you chose the right product for your intended use. Home water treatment devices have limitations and require periodic maintenance and replacement. Reverse osmosis and distillers can effectively remove lead from drinking water. If using a filter, filters must meet NSF/ANSI Standard 53 for "Drinking Water Treatment Units - Health Effects" for the removal of lead. However, all lead reductions product claims should be verified. Water softeners have little to no effect on lead reduction.

Additional Resources

Columbus Public Health
columbus.gov/lead
614-645-8191

US EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline
epa.gov/safewater/lead
800-426-4791

City of Columbus Lead Service Line Map
columbus.gov/utilities/water-protection/wqal/Lead-In-Drinking-Water
614-645-7691

Ohio EPA Certified Labs for Lead Testing
epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/28/documents/labcert/Combined-Lab-List.pdf

Ohio EPA - Learn about Lead
epa.ohio.gov/monitor-pollution/pollution-issues/learn-about-lead

NSF International
NSF.org
800-673-8010

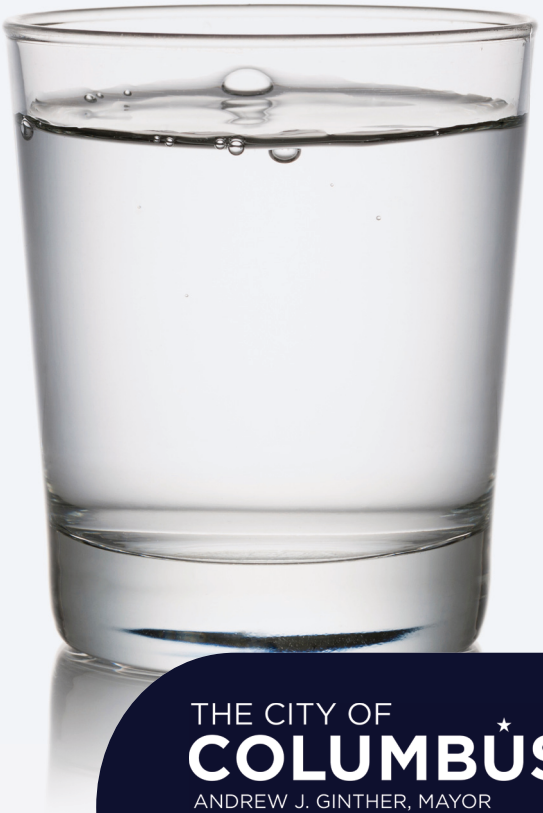
AWWA - Drinktap
Drinktap.org

Contact Us

City of Columbus
Water Quality Assurance Lab
614-645-7691
WaterQuality@columbus.gov

Fall 2023

Reducing Exposure to Lead in Water



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC UTILITIES

Is Lead in Columbus Water?

There is **no detectable** lead in:

- The water pulled from the reservoirs and wells that supply your drinking water,
- The treated water that leaves the city's three drinking water plants, or
- 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.

Water line breaks and repairs in areas with lead service lines may cause disruptions in water quality, including discolored water and/or potentially a temporary increase in lead levels in drinking water.

Water Quality Information

The U.S. EPA action level for lead in water is currently 15 parts per billion (ppb). During this last testing period more than 90% of the homes tested were below the level of detection (1 ppb).

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 latest Consumer Confidence Report at columbus.gov/ccr or call the **Columbus Water Quality Assurance Lab at 614-645-7691.**

Sources of Lead in Homes

Lead is a common, natural metal found throughout the environment and is used in many commercial products.

Common sources of lead exposure include:

- Lead contaminated dust or soil.
- Lead based paint (banned since 1978).
- Some lead and copper plumbing materials, particularly prior to 1989, and brass fixtures prior to 2014.
- Certain types of pottery, pewter, jewelry and cosmetics.

The most effective way to limit exposure to lead in drinking water is to flush the tap for at least 30 seconds to 3 minutes if the water has not been used for several hours (6 or more).

Ways to Reduce Lead in Your Water

As a standard practice, the USEPA recommends the following actions to reduce possible lead exposure in drinking water:

- If water has not been used for several hours, run the tap until there is a noticeable temperature drop. Then, run water for 30 seconds to 3 minutes before using it for drinking and cooking. This helps flush water that may have contained lead that may have leached from plumbing.
- Use cold water for cooking, drinking and preparing baby formula. Boiling the water will not reduce lead.
- Clean your faucet aerators regularly.

For additional information, visit drinktap.org or epa.gov/safewater/lead.

NEW

Scan to Complete our Service Line Material Survey

Know your Plumbing Materials

- 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 1989 may have copper pipe with lead solder.
- Plumbing fixtures (like faucets) made prior to 2014 may contain up to 8% lead.

Complete our Service Line Survey to determine and report your service line material type! Call 614-645-7691 for questions or to request a paper version of the survey.

How does Columbus Treat for Lead?

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 in the pipes to serve as a barrier. This prevents conditions that can cause lead to leach into the water.

As required by 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 drinking water plants is tested regularly for corrosivity.