WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT LEAD
LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Lead is a heavy metal which harms the brain and nervous system of those who are exposed to it. Lead has been found in paint chips, household dust, soil, drinking water, and some products like paint, jewelry, toys, and some foods.

Lead in Drinking Water

The EPA has set the maximum contaminant level goal for lead in drinking water at zero because lead can be harmful to human health even at low exposure levels.

Lead can enter drinking water through plumbing materials like pipes, faucets, and other plumbing fixtures that contain lead. Some drinking water fountains have lead-lined tank. Other plumbing fixtures like lab faucets, hoses, outdoor spigots, or hand washing sinks may also have lead because they were not designed for drinking water.

The best way to know your risk of exposure to lead in drinking water is to identify the potential sources of lead in your service line and household plumbing.

If you think that you or your child has been exposed to lead, contact your health care provider. Most children and adults who are exposed to lead have no symptoms. The best way to tell if you or your child has been exposed is with a blood lead test.

There is no safe level of lead exposure. There is no cure for lead poisoning. BUT - it is 100% preventable!

You cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water.

TO DO

- Ask your water provider if you have a lead service line providing water to your home. If you have a lead service line, ask if there are any programs to assist with removal of the lead service line going to your home.
- Test your water for lead. There are also laboratories that are certified to test for lead in water. Testing results can vary depending on the time of day, season, and other factors.
- If needed, filter the water you use for drinking and cooking. Use “point-of-use” that are certified (NSF/ANSI standard 53 for lead removal and NSF/ANSI standard 42 for particulate removal). If you have a lead service line, use a filter for all water you use for drinking or cooking.
- Flush your water to reduce potential exposure to lead from household lead plumbing. This is especially important when the water has been off and sitting in the pipes for more than 6 hours.
- If formula feeding, test your water and filter if needed.

A Fact Sheet from

healthychildrenproject.org/lead