

## Important Information About Lead in Your Drinking Water

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

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

This notice contains important information about lead in drinking water. Lead is not found at elevated levels in New York City's reservoirs or distribution system, but elevated levels of lead were detected in tap water samples at some homes with lead service lines (homes built before 1961 may have lead service lines), or internal fixtures and plumbing that contain lead, or that have internal plumbing joined by lead solder (plumbing installed before 1987 may contain lead solder) from samples taken this summer.

It provides information on the health effects of lead, the sources of lead and how lead can get into tap water, and simple steps you can take to reduce potential exposure to lead in tap water.

For More Information, call 311, or visit DEP's web site at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep). For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) or contact your health care provider. You can also visit the New York State Department of Health website at [www.health.ny.gov](http://www.health.ny.gov).

### Need Help in another language?

- Si a usted le gustaría una copia de este folleto en español, por favor visite el sitio Web de DEP en [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), o llame al 311.
- Если Вы хотите получить копию данной брошюры на русском языке, посетите, пожалуйста, сайт Управления охраны окружающей среды (DEP) [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), или позвоните по номеру 311.
- Si ou ta renmen jwenn yon kopi tiliv sa a nan lang Kreyòl Ayisyen, tanpri ale sou sit wèb DEP, [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), oswa rele 311.
- 如果您想要這份冊子的中文本，請訪問 DEP 的網站 [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep)，或者撥打 311。
- 본 안내서의 한국어 버전이 필요하시면 DEP 웹사이트 [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) 를 방문하시거나 311 번으로 전화해 주십시오.
- Se desiderate una copia in italiano del presente opuscolo, siete pregati di visitare il sito di DEP: [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), o di chiamare il 311.
- דאָקומענט דעם פון קאַפּיע אַ וועלן וואָלט איר אויב פס "דע דעם באזוכט גוט אזוי זייט, יידיש אויף 311 קלינגט אַדער [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) וויבזייט



**Environmental  
Protection**

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor  
Carter H. Strickland, Jr. Commissioner

## Important Information about Lead in Household Plumbing



## Sources of Lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment and has been used in paint, plumbing pipes and faucets, and other products. Lead can be found in household dust, soil and some imported consumer products like clay pottery, cosmetics, food and toys. Lead can also be found in water, though at much lower levels. Lead seldom occurs naturally in rivers and lakes; in fact, the water from New York City's upstate reservoirs and water distribution system is virtually lead-free.

Lead primarily enters drinking water because of corrosion of lead-containing plumbing, including pipes that connect household plumbing to the city's water mains, solder on copper pipes, and faucets. Although regulations have been put in place to reduce the lead in plumbing, your residence may still contain plumbing and fixtures with lead content if they were installed before these rules came into effect.

When water stands for several hours or more in lead service lines or plumbing systems containing lead, some lead may dissolve into the water. In such systems, this means the water first drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon after returning from work or school, may contain elevated levels of lead. Even new faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. Under New York State law, plumbing fixtures with up to 8 percent lead content can be labeled as "lead free." The National Sanitation Foundation has new standards which limit lead content to 0.25%. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing plumbing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

## How is the City Reducing the Risks of Lead in Water?

DEP maintains an active program to reduce the quantity of lead that dissolves into water, especially in private homes with lead or lead soldering in pipes. DEP carefully monitors and adjusts pH levels of water to a specific range that reduces the possibility of corrosion, and we add phosphoric acid – a common food preservative – to create a

protective film on pipes that reduces the release of metals, such as lead, from household plumbing.

DEP also performs rigorous and comprehensive monitoring every day, to ensure that we continue to deliver the healthy, great tasting water that New Yorkers expect. DEP monitors its drinking water for approximately 250 contaminants, approximately 100 of which are not currently required by regulators, and conducts more than 500,000 water quality tests each year.

## How Can I Reduce My Potential Exposure to Lead in Water?



### **RUN YOUR TAP UNTIL IT'S COLD**

Before using water for drinking, cooking or making baby formula, run your tap for at least 30 seconds, until the water is noticeably colder.



### **USE COLD TAP WATER FOR DRINKING, COOKING AND MAKING BABY FORMULA**

Never use hot tap water for drinking, cooking or making baby formula and baby cereal. Lead can dissolve more easily in hot tap water.



### **DO NOT BOIL WATER TO REMOVE LEAD**

Boiling water will not remove lead and can actually concentrate it. Running the tap is the best way to flush lead from water in pipes.



### **CLEAN YOUR FAUCET SCREENS**

Sometimes lead and sediment can build up on the individual screens at your faucets. To clean them, periodically take off the faucet strainers from all taps and run the water for 3 to 5 minutes.



## TEST FOR LEAD

If you think your household plumbing could contain lead after following these steps, call 311 or visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) to request a free water test kit.

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT HOME TREATMENT DEVICES

Home treatment devices require periodic maintenance and replacement and can only treat the water that flows from the faucet(s) to which it is connected. Be sure to check the actual performance of a specific home treatment device before and after installing the unit. Read the package to be sure the treatment device is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) for more information.



## Preventing Lead Poisoning

New York State law requires health care providers to test all children for lead poisoning at ages one and two. Also talk to your provider about testing older children and pregnant women if they are at risk.

In New York City, peeling lead paint is the most common cause of childhood lead poisoning. New York City banned lead paint in 1960, but older homes may still contain lead paint on windows, doors, walls and other surfaces. Tell your landlord if you have peeling paint in your home. Your landlord must inspect and safely repair peeling paint if a young child lives in your home. Call 311 if your landlord doesn't fix peeling paint safely. Also call 311 for more information about the health effects of lead, causes of lead poisoning and how to have your child tested for lead. For more information about what you can do to help prevent lead poisoning, visit [www.nyc.gov/health](http://www.nyc.gov/health).