How can I test water for lead?

Certified commercial laboratories can test for lead in drinking water. The cost ranges from $15 to $50 per sample. Contact your local health department or the New York State Department of Health for the names of laboratories approved to test drinking water for lead.

Consumer Beware:

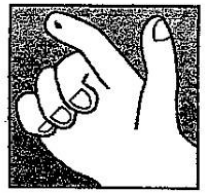
Unscrupulous businesses have been caught using tests or selling filtering devices that have not been found to be effective. Use only approved laboratories for testing.

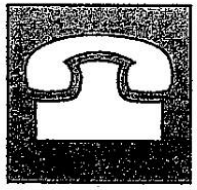
What do the laboratory results mean?

If the test results of your drinking water show lead higher than 15 parts per billion, then your local health department can advise you on what to do. If the results are for what is called a "first draw" sample, these results probably represent what was sitting in the pipes overnight and the best action is probably to run the water until it is cold before using it. If you have results from a "flush" sample, they are likely to represent what you would be drinking; the proper response to an elevated level in that case would be to identify and remove the lead source or treat the water.

How do I know if someone in my family has high blood lead levels?

Lead in drinking water is only one possible source of lead in the body. Since our biggest concern is for small children, a New York State regulation calls for universal screening of all children at about age one and age two for blood lead levels. It is important to identify an elevated level of lead in a child as early as possible to reduce or remove the source of exposure, before any long-term health problems occur. Pregnant women should also discuss with their physicians the need for blood lead testing.



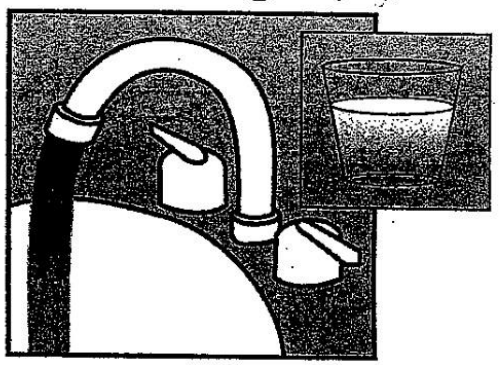


If you have any questions about testing for lead in drinking water or if you want advice on how to lower the lead levels in your drinking water, contact the local health department for your county. The New York State Department of Health can also provide information about lead. For more information about control of lead in public water supplies, call the Bureau of Public Water Supply Protection toll free at 800-458-1158 and request extension 27650. For questions about lead poisoning prevention and education, call 518-473-4602.

State of New York
George E. Pataki, Governor
Department of Health
Antonia Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H., Commissioner
2508 8/02

GET AHEAD OF LEAD!

Get the Lead Out of Drinking Water



What is lead?

Lead is a metal found naturally in the environment. It has also been widely used over the years in gasoline, house paint and plumbing fixtures. The amount of lead that is released into the environment each year has been greatly reduced by less use of leaded gas, starting in the mid-1970's. Laws forbidding the use of lead in house paint (1978) and lead in plumbing solder (1986) have helped as well. Still, lead can be a problem, especially in older homes.

Why is lead a concern?

Lead can enter people's bodies in the food they eat, the air they breathe and the water they drink. A person is **exposed** to a substance when it enters their body. Lead can be harmful to health and cause problems when it builds up in the body. Too much lead in the human body can cause serious damage to the brain, nervous system and red blood cells. Pregnant women and young children are at the greatest risk even when their exposure is to low levels of lead for short periods of time. Young children between the ages of six months and six years are more likely to suffer health problems from lead exposure. Too much exposure to lead can result in lead poisoning. Lead poisoning can slow a child's physical growth and mental development and can cause behavior problems, mental retardation, kidney and liver damage, blindness and even death.

What is the level of lead in public drinking water supplies?

In July of 1991, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established an action level for lead in public drinking water at 15 micrograms per liter, which is the same as 15 parts per billion (ppb). Water suppliers must routinely test household tap water to check lead levels. If lead levels in the water are above the EPA action level and can not be quickly corrected, the water supplier is required to notify homeowners and take steps to reduce lead levels in the drinking water.

Should I be concerned about lead if I use a private water source for drinking water?

Even with a private drinking water supply (e.g., well, spring, cistern), there may still be a concern about lead in your water. If you live in a structure that was built before 1986, then the plumbing may contain lead pipes, lead solder, or lead materials. The lead in these pipes can dissolve into your drinking water.

Is there lead in bottled drinking water?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has established a maximum contaminant level of five micrograms per liter for lead in bottled drinking water. Bottled water suppliers must routinely test their water supply for lead.

How does lead get into the water we drink?

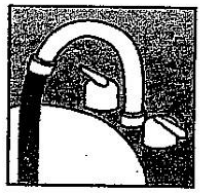
Since natural levels of lead in New York State water supplies are low, lead in drinking water usually results from the use of lead pipe in water systems or lead-based solder on water pipes. Water in the plumbing system can dissolve lead from pipes and solder. This is called leaching. Soft, corrosive or acidic (low pH) water is more likely to cause leaching. Water left standing in the pipes over a long period of time also increases leaching. The longer the water stands in the pipes, the greater the possibility of lead being dissolved into the water.

Stray electrical currents from improperly grounded electrical outlets or equipment also may increase the level of lead in drinking water. And pipes that carry drinking water from the source to homes can contribute lead to the drinking water, if the pipes were constructed or repaired using lead materials.

Can I lower the lead in my water?

Yes, the amount of lead can be easily lowered in most cases. To reduce the amount of lead in water:

- Run the tap until water is cold to the touch before using it for drinking or cooking. This is especially important after the water has been standing in the pipes overnight or over many hours. (The flushed water can be saved for watering house plants, washing dishes or general household cleaning.)



- Use only **cold** tap water for cooking, drinking or making a baby's formula. Hot water is more likely to leach lead from pipes and solder.
- Check household plumbing for lead-based pipes or solder. A plumber can help.
- Use only lead-free materials in all plumbing repairs or new faucets and pipes. The use of lead solder in plumbing was banned in New York State in 1986. Ask the plumber to show you the label from any solder packaging being used. It should state that the solder is lead-free.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

The Town of Stillwater found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. Please read this notice closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

This notice is brought to you by The Town of Stillwater. State Water System WD #1- 4517534 and WD #5-4530219 Date 10/21/13.

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 early 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 IN. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

Sources of Lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The primary source of lead exposure for most children is lead-based paint. Other sources of lead exposure include lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place (jobs that include house painting, plumbing, renovation, construction, auto repair, welding, electronics repair, jewelry or pottery repair) and exposure from certain hobbies (such as stained glass or pottery, fishing, making or shooting firearms and collecting lead or pewter figurines), as lead can be carried on clothing and shoes. Children's hands or their toys can come into contact with lead in paint, dust and soil. Therefore, washing children's hands and their toys will help reduce the potential for lead exposure from these sources

Plumbing materials, including pipes, new brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free." However, plumbing fixtures labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified may only have up to 2 percent lead. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

The source of water for the Town of Stillwater does not contain lead. When water is in contact with pipes [or service lines] or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New homes may also have lead; even "lead-free" plumbing may contain some lead.

Steps You Can Take To Reduce Your Exposure To Lead In Your Water

1. ***Run your water to flush out lead.*** Run water for 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
2. ***Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.*** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
3. ***Do not boil water to remove lead.*** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
4. ***Replace your plumbing fixtures if they are found to contain lead.*** Plumbing materials, including pipes, new brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8% lead to be labeled as "lead free." Visit the National Sanitation Foundation Web site at: www.nsf.org/Certified/Lead content/ to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.
5. ***Use bottled water or use a water filter.*** If your home is served by a lead service line, and/or if lead containing plumbing materials are found to be in your home. you may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or wvvw.iistorg/Certifiedit.eadcontent/ for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality. Any measure you take to reduce your exposure to lead should be continued until the lead source(s) has been minimized or eliminated.

Should you test your water for lead?

If lead-containing plumbing materials are identified in your home, you may want to consider testing your water for lead to determine how much lead is in your drinking water. Call us at (518) 664-4611 ext 211 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.

Should your child be tested for lead?

New York Public Health Law requires primary health care providers to screen each child for blood lead levels at one and two years of age as part of routine well child care. In addition, at each routine well-child visit, or at least annually if a child has not had routine well-child visits, primary health care providers assess each child who is at least six-months of age, but under six years of age, for high Lead exposure. Each child found to be at risk for high lead exposure is screened or referred for lead screening.

If your child has not had routine well-child visits (since the age of one year) and you are concerned about lead exposure to your child, contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead.

What Happened? What is Being Done?

Please be advised that the Saratoga County Water Authority intends to begin feeding an orthophosphate blend to its water supply beginning on Wednesday, October 23rd, 2013. This upgrade is part of our ongoing efforts to improve water quality. This treatment is anticipated to reduce lead and copper leaching in plumbing fixtures and will increase the life of distribution system and residential piping. Orthophosphate treatment is a common water additive that is already used by some of the Saratoga County Water Authority customers and previously used in the Village of Stillwater's water plant.

As part of this treatment upgrade, The Village and Town of Stillwater will be required to measure orthophosphate levels at the entry point into the Village and Town system every two weeks and in the distribution system at least every 6 months. The Saratoga County Water Authority will continue to provide the Village and Town with periodic updates of their efforts to improve water quality. The water distributed by the SCWA through the Village of Stillwater's water system remains safe to drink.

For More information

For more information you can visit the SCWA website at **www.saratogacountywaterauthority.com** or the Town of Stillwater website www.stillwaterny.org.

Visit our Web site at www.stillwaterny.org. For more information on lead in drinking water, contact your local health department at NYSDOH Glens Falls District Office, 77 Mohican Street, Glens Falls, NY 12801 (518)793-3893, or the New York State Department of Health directly by calling the toll-free number 1-800-458-1158, extension 27650, or out of state at (518) 402-7650, or by email at bpwsp@health.state.ny.us. 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**or call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD.