

Lead Public Education Notice

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER.

Community Water System

Alton Water Works found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in two homes/buildings during routine water sampling. 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.

SOURCES OF LEAD



Lead is a heavy, soft, gray, metallic element that is easily bent and shaped. Because of these qualities, lead was widely used in plumbing from service lines to kitchen and bathroom fixtures. Lead is found throughout the environment in lead-based paint, air, soil, household dust, certain spices, some types of pottery, porcelain and pewter, and water. Ingestion or inhalation of lead poses a significant health risk, especially to children and pregnant women. Lead builds up in the body and causes damage to the brain, red blood cells, and kidneys. Even low levels of lead can slow the mental and physical development of children. Very small children are easily exposed to lead dust, paint chips, or contaminated soil in your home or in the playground.

Lead enters drinking water as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away of materials containing lead in the water distribution piping and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe through 1986, leaded brass and chrome-plated brass faucets available until January 4, 2014, and in some cases, lead gooseneck connectors and service lines used through the 1950s to connect your house to the water main.

Brass faucets, fittings and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free,” may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows pipes, fittings, and fixtures with up to 0.25% weighted average of lead to be identified as “lead-free.” Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase total lead exposure, particularly for infants who drink baby formula and concentrated juices mixed with water. The EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20% or more of an infant’s total exposure to lead. **THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF LEAD.**

IMPORTANT PRECAUTIONS TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Despite our best efforts to control water corrosivity and remove lead from the water supply, lead levels in some homes or buildings can be high. Steps you can take to protect your family include the following:

- **Flush your tap every morning or after extended periods of non-use for 30 seconds or until the water runs cold.** The longer the water resides in your home’s plumbing, the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap ensures that you use fresh water that has not been in contact with lead in your plumbing.
- **Use cold water only for cooking, drinking, and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap as hot water leaches lead more quickly. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold-water tap and heat it. Keep in mind that boiling water does not reduce lead levels in the water.
- **Test your tap water.** Contact a state-accredited laboratory from the link immediately below to order a water sample bottle. Lead has no color, smell, or odor so the only way to know if you have lead is to test. [NH Accredited Laboratories for Lead Testing.](#)

ADDITIONAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

The above steps will help to reduce the lead concentrations in your drinking water. However, if a water test indicates that the drinking water from your home has lead levels of **5 ppb** or higher, additional measures to take may include:

- **Install a new faucet.** Any faucet purchased after January 4, 2014, is required to have no more than 0.25% lead content, down from 8% prior to 2014. After you perform any plumbing work in your home, all faucets must be flushed for 1 to 2 hours to dislodge any particulate lead disturbed by the work and retested to verify that levels have been reduced.
- **Check if you have a Lead or Galvanized Steel Service Line.** If your home and water service connection were built before 1989, find and examine the pipe where the water enters your home. Use a coin or key to scratch the pipe, then place a magnet on it. If the pipe is shiny and does NOT attract the magnet, IT IS LIKELY LEAD. If it is dull grey and magnetic, IT IS GALVANIZED STEEL and was likely installed with a Lead Gooseneck Connector. Call your water supplier and ask for help to have your full-service line replaced as soon as practical. Partial service line replacement is not acceptable as it causes a temporary spike in lead levels. Until the line is replaced, install a lead-certified filter, always flush your tap before collecting water for consumption, and use only COLD water for cooking and drinking.
- **Purchase bottled water for all drinking and cooking until lead sources are addressed.** Bathing and showering is fine as long as no water is swallowed.
- **Install a point of use lead filter certified under NSF 53 – Health Effects.** Follow manufacturer’s instructions for installation and filter replacement, and test before and after the filter until all lead sources have been removed. Point of use devices are limited in that each unit treats only the water that flows from the faucet to which it is connected, and all require periodic maintenance and replacement.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead. New Hampshire is a universal testing state where all infants must be tested for lead TWICE, at 1 year old and again at 2 years old. Both tests are critically important to identify and prevent lead exposure to infants.

RESOURCES

NH Health and Human Services Healthy Homes -
<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/bchs/clpp/>

NHDES Application to Identify Lead Pipes -
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeB7xcJ4E4ZmuJDsmLzcxwETN6ADbYO_c5j2h4DLuzBJWygqA/viewform

NHDES Lead in Drinking Water -
[https://des.nh.gov/water/drinking-water/lead-drinking-water;](https://des.nh.gov/water/drinking-water/lead-drinking-water;dwmonitoring@des.nh.gov;)
[dwmonitoring@des.nh.gov;](mailto:dwmonitoring@des.nh.gov)
 or (603)271-2516

EPA Lead page -
<https://www.epa.gov/lead>

National Sanitation Foundation -
<http://www.nsf.org/>

Lead Free Kids NH -
<http://leadfreekidsnh.org/>



INFORMATION FROM YOUR WATER SYSTEM

Service Line Material Classification	Definition	Total Number of Service Lines (REQUIRED to be reported under the LCRR)
Lead	Any portion of the service line is known to be made of lead. ²	0
Galvanized Requiring Replacement (GRR)	The service line is not made of lead, but a portion is galvanized and the system is unable to demonstrate that the galvanized line was never downstream of a lead service line.	0
Non-Lead	All portions of the service line are known NOT to be lead or GRR through an evidence-based record, method, or technique.	420

Lead Status Unknown	The service line material is not known to be lead or GRR. For the entire service line or a portion of it (in cases of split ownership), there is not enough evidence to support material classification.	259
----------------------------	--	-----

For more information, call us at Alton Water Works or visit our website at <http://www.alton.nh.gov> For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your health care provider.

Public Water System Contact

Alton Water Works (603) 875-4200