



Lead and Drinking Water - TIPS FOR RESIDENTS

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF LEAD IN DRINKING WATER?

Lead in drinking water differs from home to home because it primarily comes from corrosion of faucets, other plumbing fixtures and lead solder in the home plumbing. Lead may also be present in service pipelines that bring water from the distribution system pipeline to the home.

In San Francisco, all known lead service pipelines from the distribution system were removed in the 1980s; since then, whenever a previously unidentified lead service pipeline is found, it is quickly replaced.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

If consumed, lead has toxic effects on the human body including neurobehavioral effects (decreased intelligence) in children and hypertension in adults. Elevated levels of lead can also cause serious health problems to pregnant women and infants, and children under the age of 6.

HOW CAN I REDUCE POTENTIAL LEAD EXPOSURE FROM DRINKING WATER?

When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can flush your tap until it feels colder, for approximately 1 minute, before using water for drinking or cooking. You can also use certified filters to further reduce any potential lead exposure from drinking water. If you are concerned about lead levels in your water, you may wish to have your water tested.

CAN I HAVE MY WATER TESTED?

San Francisco residents may request a sampling kit and analysis for a small fee (\$25) by calling 311. Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program participants can request a free lead test. This tap water sampling is conducted by the resident according to a lead and copper sampling procedure provided by us. We will pick up the collected sample, conduct analysis, and provide results to the resident.

Reducing Lead in Your System - Identifying and Purchasing Lead-Free Faucets

DO ALL FAUCETS HAVE LEAD?

Most faucets purchased prior to 2010 were constructed of brass or chrome-plated brass containing up to 8 percent lead. Water sitting overnight (or for several hours) in a brass faucet tends to leach lead from the brass faucet interior which may produce relatively high lead levels in the first draw of drinking water.

HOW CAN I TELL IF A NEW FAUCET IS "LEAD FREE"?

Residential kitchen faucets, bathroom faucets, bar faucets, drinking fountains, and icemakers sold in the U.S. may be assumed to be lead-free because the Uniform Plumbing Code is enforced and requires that they contain no more than 0.25% lead. You should look for plumbing fixtures marked with a certification mark (such as SA, UL, or NSF) and the identifier NSF/ANSI 61 Annex G, NSF 61-G, NSF/ANSI 372, NSF-372, the term "Low Lead" or another of the identifiers accepted by **NSF International**, an independent organization that certifies and tests products to ensure they comply with given standards.

ARE THERE ANY FAUCETS WITH NO LEAD AT ALL?

Some faucet manufacturers produce plastic faucets that have virtually zero lead. Other manufacturers use copper tubes inside the brass faucets or apply special coatings on the inside of the faucets to minimize or eliminate lead leaching.

DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF I HAVE A LEAD-FREE FAUCET?

In extreme cases older faucets can contribute up to one-third of the lead in the first-draw of water in the morning with the remainder coming from other plumbing such as pre-1988 lead solder joints in copper pipes. Residents who let the water run at the tap in the morning for approximately one minute and use cold water for cooking should have little concern with respect to lead in the drinking water. If residents are still concerned, they can request from the SFPUC a lead test (at a nominal charge that can be waived under special circumstances). Residents always have the option of replacing an older kitchen or bathroom faucet with a new lead-free lead faucet.

DO SOME PLUMBING FIXTURES STILL CONTAIN LEAD?

Federal and State lead regulations do not cover hose bibs, bathtub fixtures, shower heads, and industrial faucets. Avoid drinking or cooking with water from these fixtures. Since the year 2010, all kitchen faucets sold in California have been lead-free. When water fixtures and fittings intended to convey drinking water are replaced, they must be replaced with lead-free products (containing no more than 0.25% lead).

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD?

Drinking Water: The SFPUC Water Quality Division can provide information on the quality of your water and can be reached at **(650) 652-3100** or email quality@sfwater.org.

General Lead Exposure: San Francisco residents may also call the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Branch which strives to promote health and quality of life in San Francisco by ensuring healthy living and working conditions in the City and County of San Francisco. Please call **(415) 252-3800** if you are concerned that a young child may be exposed to lead hazards, such as lead paint.

CONSUMER RESOURCES: REGULATION/HEALTH

- USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline **800-426-4791**
- USEPA lead information: www.epa.gov/your-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water
- USEPA LCR: www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule
- SWRCB: www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/leadandcopperrule.shtml
- California Department of Public Health: www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPPH/DEODC/CLPPB/Pages/CLPPBhome.aspx
- San Francisco Department of Public Health, Lead Prevention Program: www.sfdph.org/dph/eh/CEHP/Lead/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/

NSF, WATER TREATMENT PRODUCTS COMPLYING WITH NSF61-G FOR LEAD:

- Search for NSF Certified Drinking Water Treatment Units or Filters: www.nsf.org/Certified/DWTU/

We're Committed to Quality: Our highly trained chemists, technicians and inspectors consistently monitor the water we serve—throughout our system, every day of the year. For additional information and materials, please visit sfwater.org/quality. For questions about YOUR water, please call 311. You can also visit 311.org.

And follow us on



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