

LEAD AND DRINKING WATER FROM PRIVATE WELLS — KNOW THE FACTS

What is lead?

Lead is a naturally occurring element found in the earth's crust. Lead can be found in all parts of our environment - air, soil, water, and even inside our homes. Federal and state regulatory standards have helped to reduce the amount of lead in air, drinking water, soil, consumer products, food, and occupational settings.

How does lead get into drinking water?

Lead rarely occurs naturally in water. Lead pipes are the main contributor to high lead levels in drinking water. Lead may also come from solder used to join copper pipes, and brass in faucets, coolers, and valves. Private wells installed before 2000 may contain lead in the materials used to help seal the well above the well screen. Older submersible pumps used in some wells may also contain leaded-brass components. Corrosion of these pipes and parts can cause lead to get into drinking water.

My drinking water comes from a private well, how can I find out if there is lead in my drinking water?

Learn how to have the water in your home tested for lead by contacting the **Oakland County Health Division's Environmental Health Services Unit** at [248-858-1312](tel:248-858-1312).

What can I do to reduce lead in my drinking water?

If your water test indicates your tap water has lead levels above the EPA's action level of 15 ppb, consider the following things you can do to reduce the risk of lead exposure in your drinking water:

- Replace faucets. Older faucets, fittings, and valves sold before 2014 may contain up to eight percent (8%) lead, even if marked 'lead-free'. Replace faucets with those made in 2014 or later and are certified to contain 0.25% lead or less.
- Flush your cold-water pipes by running the water for approximately five minutes. The longer water sits in pipes, the more lead it may contain. You can fill containers for later use, after the flushing process.
- You may choose to install a water filter that is certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 53 for lead reduction. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends the filter be certified for NSF/ANSI Standard 42 for particulate reduction (Class 1). If a water filter is installed, replace cartridges at least as often as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling will not remove the lead.
- Use cold filtered water or bottled water for drinking, cooking, making baby formula, and brushing teeth for children under age 18 years and pregnant women. Commercially prepared bottled water that meets federal and state drinking water standards are recommended.
- Clean aerators. Aerators regulate flow of water and can accumulate small particles of lead in their screens. Unscrew the small round piece that is attached to the bottom of the faucet and soak it in vinegar for 5 minutes. Rinse the aerator with water and screw it back onto the faucet. Repeat this procedure every few weeks.

Resources

For questions about blood lead testing and health effects of lead, contact the **Oakland County Health Division Nurse On Call** at [800-848-5533](tel:800-848-5533) or **MDHHS Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program** at [517-335-8885](tel:517-335-8885).

To test the paint in your home for lead, contact a certified lead inspector.

To learn more about safely renovating a home built before 1978, contact the **Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Healthy Homes Section** at [866-691-5323](tel:866-691-5323).

To find out if your home has plumbing that contains lead, contact your local Department of Public Works.