

Lead in Drinking Water Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Why is lead in drinking water a health risk?

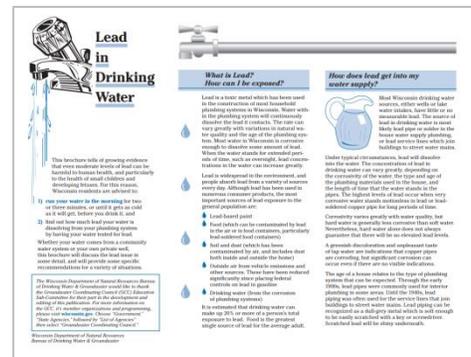
The health effects of lead consumption from drinking water can significantly impair the health of all segments of the population but particularly healthy development for children and for pregnant women. In 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency published a regulation to control lead and copper in drinking water. The rule is part of the Safe Water Drinking Act. It requires water systems to monitor drinking water at customer taps. If lead concentrations exceed the Action Level of 0.015 mg/L (or 15 parts per billion) in more than 10 percent of taps, the system must complete additional actions to control the corrosion.

Numerous resources can be found about the effects of lead in drinking water. Listed here are several useful links.

[Concerned About Lead in Your Drinking Water?](#)



[Lead in Drinking Water](#)



How does lead get into drinking water?

Generally, finished drinking water contains no lead. Lead does not naturally occur in water.

Lead enters drinking water from lead materials piping and water fixtures particularly some made before 1986. Galvanized pipes were used widely throughout the United States for water laterals. Lead particles can attach to these pipes, solders and fixtures which can then enter the drinking water.

Treatment chemicals added at the City Water Works coat the pipes so that the lead does not leach into the water. If drinking water is corrosive, it can corrode customers' lead service lines and plumbing fixtures, which can result in elevated lead levels in drinking water.

Homes constructed before 1950s may be served by a lead water service line. Copper pipe installed before 1985 may have been installed using lead-containing solder.

What is the City's water quality regarding lead and copper?

Eau Claire Water Works treats drinking water to ensure it is not corrosive. We do this by pH adjustment that coats the surface of lead service lines, so the metal does not leach into the drinking water.

Corrosion control is an important part of Eau Claire Water Works' treatment process. By carefully managing the chemistry of our drinking water, Eau Claire Water Works ensures the water is not corrosive.

Each day, samples are analyzed to ensure the Eau Claire Water Works' treatment for corrosion control remains effective.

How can I reduce my risk of lead in my water?

To determine your risk, you must understand your own water service. Testing your current water quality and identifying the type of water service pipe and fixtures you have will help you evaluate your risk.

If you have concerns about lead in your water, consider having your water tested. Use the link to the City/County Health Department to get the process started.

Replace your lead water service line, interior lead piping and any leaded water fixtures. All galvanized piping should be upgraded to copper piping as recommended by the AWWA.

What other measures can I practice for good water quality drinking water?

Use only cold water for drinking, cooking and making baby formula. Boiling water does not remove lead from water.

Regularly clean your faucet's screen (also known as an aerator).

Consider using a water filter certified to remove lead and know when it's time to replace the filter.

Before drinking water from your tap each morning, flush your pipes by running your tap, taking a shower, doing laundry or a load of dishes.

Should I have my water tested?

The City of Eau Claire's water quality very closely monitored every day. Our finished drinking water contains no lead.

If you are concerned about your particular property, you may by all means test your drinking water quality. To find out how to test your water, please contact Environmental Health at the City/County Health Department for types of tests and pricing. Contact the City/County Health Department at 715-839-4718 or use this link.

[City of Eau Claire Health Department Environmental Health link](#)

Contact the Utilities Division for more information about qualifying for the LSLRP.

leadservice@eauclairewi.gov or call 715-839-5045