

# Understanding your Test Results: High Levels of Lead or Copper

Where you collected your sample makes a difference!

## If your water sample was collected from:

**Non-primary drinking faucet (pressure tank, bathroom tap, outdoor spigot, etc.)**



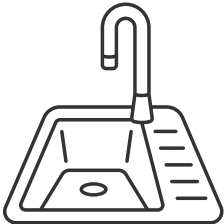
- These fixtures are NOT designed for drinking water and often have higher levels of lead or copper.
- **If your water sample was collected here, it is not an accurate representation of the water you are using for drinking or cooking from your kitchen tap.**

## Next steps:

**Test again with a water sample from your kitchen faucet.** This will provide an accurate representation of the water you use for drinking or cooking.

## If your water sample was collected from:

**Primary drinking faucet (kitchen tap)**



- If your sample was collected right away in the morning (as recommended), the amount of lead and copper is the highest it will be throughout the day.
- As water gets flushed through the plumbing with daily use, the amount of lead and copper in your water will decrease.

## Next steps:

**Test again.** The only way to know if your levels of lead and copper are decreasing to safer levels is to test your water again. A flush sample is recommended. To do this, let the water run 3 - 5 minutes before collecting the sample.

- **If the lead/copper level in the flush sample remains at unsafe levels,** find a long-term solution on the next page.
- **If the lead/copper level has decreased to a safer level,** you can consume the water **ONLY** after flushing the system.
  - **To flush the system,** run your water for 3-5 minutes every time before using the water for drinking or cooking. This **temporarily** lowers the amount of lead and/or copper in your water. *Note: This is a short-term solution. Find a long-term solution on the next page.*

# Long-term Solutions for High Levels of Lead and Copper in Drinking Water

## 1 Identify where the lead or copper is coming from.

You may be able to identify lead and copper pipes and fixtures yourself, or you may want to ask a licensed plumber to take a look if you are unsure. Lead and copper can exist in fixtures, fittings, solder, and pipes. Examples of lead and copper pipes are below.



*Photo courtesy of Madison Water Utility*

Lead pipes are dull gray in color and are soft enough to be easily scratched with a house key. A magnet will not stick to a lead pipe.



*Photo courtesy of Madison Water Utility*

If you scratch an area on the pipe, and it appears copper in color (like a penny), the pipe is copper. A magnet will not stick to a copper pipe.

## 2 Check your kitchen faucet for a lead-free certification or replace current faucets with lead-free ones.

You can find more information on how to identify lead-free faucets here:

[https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-06/how-to-id-lead-free-certified-drinking-water-products-epa\\_june-2024.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-06/how-to-id-lead-free-certified-drinking-water-products-epa_june-2024.pdf)

## 3 Use a treatment system to filter metals out of your water.

You can find systems certified to reduce contaminant concentrations in water, including lead and copper here: <https://info.nsf.org/Certified/DWTU/>