



BARRINGTON

Consumer Notice – EPA Health Facts

Under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA set the action level for lead in drinking water at 15 ppb. This means utilities must ensure that water from the customer's tap does not exceed this level in at least 90 percent of the homes sampled (90th percentile value). The action level is *the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow*. If water from the tap does exceed this limit, then the utility must take certain steps to correct the problem. Because lead may pose serious health risks, the EPA set a Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) of zero for lead. The MCLG is *the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health*. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

What Are the 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.

What Are the Sources of Lead?

The primary sources of lead exposure for most children are deteriorating lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust, and lead-contaminated residential soil. Exposure to lead is a significant health concern, especially for young children and infants whose growing bodies tend to absorb more lead than the average adult.

What Can I Do To Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water?

- ***Run your water to flush out lead.*** If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 30-60 seconds **or** until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
- ***Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.***
- ***Do not boil water to remove lead.*** Excessive boiling water makes the lead more concentrated. The lead remains when the water evaporates.
- ***Look for alternative sources or treatment of your water (bottled water, home filter, etc.)***
- ***Test your water for lead.***
- ***Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.***
- ***Have your home wiring checked by an electrician.*** If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater.

For Information on Reducing Lead Exposure Around Your Home and Health Effects of Lead

Call Public Works at (847)-381-7903, visit EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/lead, call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD, or contact your health care provider.