

How Can I Tell if the Water in My Home Has Too Much Lead?

Many laboratories can test your water to see if it contains lead. Search for accredited laboratories at <https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/creditedlabs/labsearch.seam>

How Can I Test My Child for Lead Exposure?

If you are concerned about your child's lead exposure, call your doctor, local health department, or the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-4620 or 800-657-3908 to find out how to have your child tested.

For More Information

For more information, contact:

Paul Kauppi
Director of Public Works
651-429-8531

Or visit the City's website at:
<http://www.whitebearlake.org>

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and on the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead, or contact your health care provider.

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mn DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH
Division of Environmental Health
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/water>

Information about how plumbing fixtures and piping can elevate lead levels in your tap water



Many homes constructed before 1986 still have plumbing that contains lead, which can elevate lead levels in tap water. In addition to regular testing performed at its water treatment plant and groundwater wells, the City of White Bear Lake participates in a residential testing program to monitor the water coming out of household taps. During the last round of testing, the City of White Bear Lake found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings.

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 can be 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.

Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children.

Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

What Are the Sources of Lead?

Lead is rarely found in natural sources of water, such as groundwater.

You may be in contact with lead through paint, water, dust, soil, food, hobbies, or your job. The most common way for Minnesotans to come in contact with lead is through lead-based paint found in homes built before 1978.

[Lead Poisoning Prevention: Common Sources](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/fs/common.html) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/fs/common.html> has information about how to reduce your contact with lead from sources other than your drinking water.

Lead can get into drinking water after it leaves the treatment plant, as it passes through your household plumbing system. Homes built before 1940 may have lead service lines that connect them to public water. Plumbing systems built before 1986 may have lead parts. New "lead free" pipes and plumbing parts may still contain 0.25% lead. Brass parts may also contain some lead. Note that many faucets are made of brass even if they do not have a "brass" color. The amount of lead that gets into in drinking water depends on many factors, such as the amount of lead in plumbing materials, water chemistry, and water usage.

How Can I Reduce My Exposure to Lead in Water?

1. **Let the water run** before using it for drinking or cooking. If you have a lead service line, let the water run for 3-5 minutes. If you do not have a lead service line, let the water run for 30-60 seconds. The more time water has been sitting in your pipes, the more lead it may contain.
 - You can find out if you have a lead service line by contacting your public water system, or by reading: [Do you have lead pipes in your home?](https://apps.npr.org/find-lead-pipes-in-your-home/en/#intro) <https://apps.npr.org/find-lead-pipes-in-your-home/en/#intro>
 - Ways to let the water run before using it for drinking or cooking:
 - Do household tasks like showering or running the dishwasher first
 - Collect tap water for cleaning or watering plants
 - Make sure you let the water run from individual faucets for a short time before using them for drinking or cooking.
 - Consider keeping a container of drinking water in the refrigerator to reduce how often you need to let the water run.
2. **Use cold water** for drinking, making food, and making baby formula. Hot water releases more lead from pipes than cold water. Boiling

water does not reduce lead levels and may actually increase them.

3. **Test your water.** The only way to know if lead has been reduced by letting it run is to check with a test. If letting the water run does not reduce lead, consider other options to reduce your exposure.
4. **Treat your water** or find an alternative source if a test shows your water has high levels of lead after you let the water run. You can learn more about water treatment options at [Home Water Treatment](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html>.

What Did We Find?

In June, 2019, White Bear Lake analyzed tap water samples taken from a number of homes, a percentage of which exceeded drinking water limits for lead.

What Are We Doing about the Issue?

White Bear Lake will continue to conduct regular water sampling of homes, as it has done for decades. Because the vast majority of White Bear Lake's housing stock was constructed prior to 1986, before "lead-free" plumbing was used, elevated lead levels in some homes is expected. The degree of lead is dependent upon a number of factors, as highlighted in this brochure.

In response to the recent home testing results, White Bear Lake is sending out this information to remind home/building owners of their potential exposure.

Consumer Confidence Report (CCR)

Each year the City of White Bear publishes a CCR, which can be found at www.whitebearlake.org/CCR.