

Lead in Drinking Water in Child Care Settings

WAYS TO REDUCE CHILDREN’S EXPOSURE

As a provider of child care services for Minnesota’s children, you value their healthy development. Awareness of environmental concerns and actions that you can take to reduce adverse effects can help make a quality child care experience. This information sheet provides general information about reducing lead in drinking water.



- Child Cares in Minnesota are required to test for lead in drinking water and must have started no later than July 1, 2024.
- Report results of testing to MDH beginning July 1, 2024.
- Use the Model Plan document, [Reducing Lead in School Drinking Water \(PDF\)](#), to test all taps used for drinking and food preparation at least once every 5 years;
- Take action to minimize exposure to lead and maintain your drinking water quality after water has been still (overnight/weekend/holiday or other closures); and
- Take action to reduce lead exposure whenever a test reveals the presence of lead at 5 ppb or more.

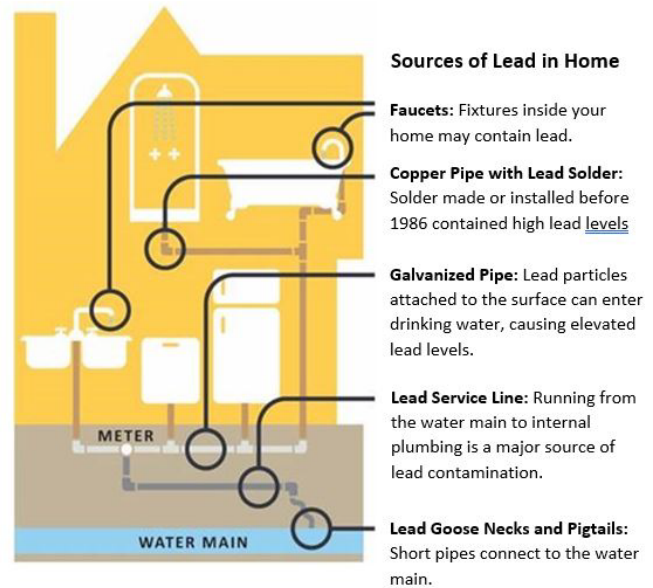
Lead Exposure

There is no safe level for lead in the body. Reducing levels of lead in drinking water is an important part of reducing the overall exposure to lead.

Lead enters drinking water through corrosion of household plumbing and is usually not found in the source of water. Water that is unused and remains in the plumbing for a long time may contain higher levels of lead.

Children may be exposed to lead in drinking water when drinking water that has been in contact with lead plumbing materials, or when drinking formula made with water that contains lead. Learn more about all sources of lead by visiting the [MDH Lead Program](#). Childhood exposure to low levels of lead can contribute to:

- Lower IQ
- Hearing impairments
- Reduced attention span
- Hyperactivity
- Developmental delays
- Poor classroom performance



How to Protect Yourself and Others

There are many things child care providers can do to reduce exposure to lead. This is especially important when serving sensitive groups like children.

- Develop a flushing plan to let the water run after the water has been still for a long time such as overnight, a weekend, and holidays. Some places may need daily or twice daily flushing;

REDUCING CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

- Always use cold water for cooking and drinking. Do not use the hot water tap for food or beverage preparation;
- Test your water at least once every 5 years using;
- If tests are above 5 ppb reduce lead by removing sources of lead from your plumbing or using treatment. [Learn more about Home Water Treatment Factsheet](#); and
- Providing routine maintenance:
 - Aerators at the end of faucets have small screens that can trap sediments containing lead. These can usually be easily unscrewed, cleaned, and replaced.
 - If you use a filter, be sure to replace it according to the manufacturer's instructions. Improper care of filters and other point-of-use devices can cause lead levels to increase.



Take Action if Lead is Found in Drinking Water

There are many simple actions that can be taken to reduce or eliminate lead exposure from drinking water. Use the Model Plan document, [Reducing Lead in School Drinking Water \(PDF\)](#), to find ways to reduce lead exposure. While there is no safe level of lead, child care providers must take action to reduce lead when test results are above 5 ppb.

- Anyone with health concerns should be directed to work with their pediatrician or health care provider to address health concerns about lead from all sources of exposure. Lead in water does not typically cause an elevated blood lead level on its own and reducing the source of lead is usually the best next step;
- Remove lead in the plumbing system or replace with certified lead-free materials;
- Begin a flushing program, as described above;
- Install a Point-of-Use Water Treatment Device to remove lead;
- Filters and other point-of-use devices may be used to remove lead. It is strongly encouraged these devices are approved to meet NSF Standard 53, NSF Standard 58 or the equivalent; and
- Use commercially prepared bottled water.
- Communicate results of lead testing with parents, staff, and MDH.

References

[Reducing Lead in School Drinking Water \(PDF\)](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/pbschoolguide.pdf>)

[MDH Lead Program \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/index.html)

[Accredited Laboratories \(https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam\)](https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam)

[Home Water Treatment Factsheet](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html>)

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08/2023 | To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4700.