

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

*City of Waterville found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. 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.*

### 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.*

### Sources of Lead

Lead is rarely found in natural sources of water such as rivers and lakes or underground aquifers. 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.

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 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?

- **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 home's pipes, the more lead it may contain.
- **Use cold water** for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula. Hot water absorbs more lead from pipes than cold water.
- **Boiling water does not reduce lead levels** and may actually increase them.
- **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. Many laboratories can test your water to see if it contains lead.
  - If you wish to have your water tested, there are 2 local accredited labs near Waterville, UC Labs in Janesville 507-234-5835 and MN Valley Testing Laboratory in New Ulm (507)354-8517. The approximate cost to the property owner is estimated to be \$65.00.

- [Search for Accredited Laboratories](https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam) (<https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam>) to purchase a sample container and get instructions on how to submit a sample.
- **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: [Types of Point-of-Use Devices for Lead Reduction](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/poulead.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/poulead.html>)
- **Get your child tested.** Contact your local health department or doctor to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure. Find out more information about child lead poisoning prevention with [Lead: Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/faqs.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/faqs.html>)

### **What Did We Find?**

City of Waterville analyzed tap water samples taken from a number of homes and buildings in the city. Some of the samples were above the action level for lead.

### **What Are We Doing about the Issue?**

The City of Waterville has tested homes for lead since 1993 and has not exceeded the lead limits in the past. Contributing factors could be a result of lead service lines or improper sampling and not due to the distribution system. The City of Waterville will continue testing and provide educational materials as required by MN Department of Health. The City of Waterville will also be conducting an inventory of all homes to identify lead service lines from the curb stop into the homes to help identify possible drinking water risks.

### **For More Information**

*Call us at 507-362-8300 or visit our website at [cityofwaterville.com](http://cityofwaterville.com). For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit [Lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) (<http://www.epa.gov/lead>) or contact your doctor.*

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