

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Oakland Borough Water Authority found elevated levels of lead in drinking water tap samples. 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.**

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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 a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is also a possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free" may contribute lead to drinking water. Until 2014, the law allowed end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as "lead-free." When water is in contact with pipes, and plumbing containing lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes or lead solder. EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Don't forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Your Water

1. **Run your water to flush out lead.** Run water for 15-30 seconds to flush lead from interior plumbing or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours.
2. **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
3. **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.

4. **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality.
5. **Test your water for lead.** Call us at 570-396-1111 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.
6. **Get your child's blood tested.** Contact your local health department or health care provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead, if you are concerned about exposure.
7. **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.** New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free" may contribute lead to drinking water. Until 2014, the law allowed end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8% lead to be labeled as "lead-free."

What Happened? What is being done?

Lead-copper exceedance was detected in Oakland Borough customer's homes (2 out of 10 samples) during our annual testing between June and July 2024.

The actions recommended by Oakland Borough Water Authority were laid out in the flyer Titled "Consumer Notification of Lead Status Unknown Service Line" dated 10/31/2024. Those actions will remedy the lead-copper problem.

In 1983 Oakland Borough water service was upgraded with new mains made with ductile iron water mains and with PVC service lines from the mains to the curb stops.

It is important to our customers to identify what type of service line comes into their homes. It is necessary to determine if the pipes are lead or if they are another material. This past month we sent out the forms with your bills to fill out and inform the Oakland Borough Water Authority of the customer's findings.

OBWA will continue to monitor lead-copper levels. This is a requirement by DEP.

For More Information:

Call us at 570-396-1111 or (if applicable) visit our website at oaklandboroughwaterauthority.com. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead, or contact your health care provider.

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