

LEAD & DRINKING WATER

Tips for Residents



WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF LEAD IN DRINKING WATER?

Lead in drinking water differs from home to home because it primarily comes from corrosion of faucets, other plumbing fixtures and lead solder in the home plumbing. Lead may also be present in service pipelines that bring water from the distribution system pipeline to the home.

In San Francisco, all known lead service pipelines from the distribution system were removed in the 1980s; since then, whenever a previously unidentified lead service pipeline is found, it is quickly replaced. More recently, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) completed an inventory that included customer-owned service lines under the Environmental Protection Agency's updated lead regulation. No customer-owned lead service lines were identified.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

When consumed, lead is **toxic** to the human body. Young children are most susceptible to lead because their bodies absorb lead more readily than adults and are more sensitive to the damaging health effects of lead. Elevated levels of lead can also cause serious health problems to pregnant women and infants.

HOW CAN I REDUCE POTENTIAL LEAD EXPOSURE FROM DRINKING WATER?

When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can flush your tap until it feels colder, for approximately 1 minute, before using water for drinking or cooking. You can also use certified filters to further reduce any potential lead exposure from drinking water. If you are concerned about lead levels in your water, you may wish to have your water tested.

Reducing Lead in Your System- Identifying and Purchasing Lead-Free Faucets

DO ALL FAUCETS HAVE LEAD?

Most faucets purchased prior to 2010 were constructed of brass or chrome-plated brass containing up to 8 percent lead. Water sitting overnight (or for several hours) in a brass faucet tends to leach lead from the brass faucet interior which may produce relatively high lead levels in the first draw of drinking water.

HOW CAN I TELL IF A NEW FAUCET IS "LEAD FREE"?

Residential kitchen faucets, bathroom faucets, bar faucets, drinking fountains, and icemakers sold in the U.S. may be assumed to be lead-free because the Uniform Plumbing Code is enforced and requires that they contain no more than 0.25% lead. You should look for plumbing fixtures marked with a certification mark (such as SA, UL, or NSF) and the identifier NSF/ ANSI 61 Annex G, NSF 61-G, NSF/ANSI 372, NSF-372, the term "Low Lead" or another of the identifiers accepted by **NSF International**, an independent organization that certifies and tests products to ensure they comply with given standards.

CAN I HAVE MY WATER TESTED?

If you are a San Francisco resident, you can order a lead test for \$25.00 per tap by following the instructions on sfpuc.gov under "Order Lead Testing", and submit a Lead Testing Application. Participants in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program can request one lead test for free by submitting a Lead Testing Application and completing a WIC voucher issued by a WIC office in San Francisco. For questions, call SFPUC Water Quality Division (WQD) at (650) 652-3100, Monday through Friday between 8 am and 5 pm.

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ARE THERE ANY FAUCETS WITH NO LEAD AT ALL?

Some faucet manufacturers produce plastic faucets that have virtually zero lead. Other manufacturers use copper tubes inside the brass faucets or apply special coatings on the inside of the faucets to minimize or eliminate lead leaching.

DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF I HAVE A LEAD-FREE FAUCET?

In extreme cases older faucets can contribute up to one-third of the lead in the first draw of water in the morning with the remainder coming from other plumbing such as pre-1988 lead solder joints in copper pipes. Residents who let the water run at the tap in the morning for approximately one minute and use cold water for cooking should have little concern with respect to lead in the drinking water. If residents are still concerned, they can request from the SFPUC a lead test (at a nominal charge that can be waived under special circumstances). Residents always have the option of replacing an older kitchen or bathroom faucet with a new lead-free faucet.

DO SOME PLUMBING FIXTURES STILL CONTAIN LEAD?

Federal and State lead regulations do not cover hose bibs, bathtub fixtures, shower heads, and industrial faucets. Avoid drinking or cooking with water from these fixtures. Since the year 2010, all kitchen and bathroom faucets sold in California have been lead-free. When water fixtures and fittings intended to convey drinking water are replaced, they must be replaced with lead-free products (containing no more than 0.25% lead).

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD?

Drinking Water:

The SFPUC Water Quality Division can provide information on the quality of your water and can be reached at **(650) 652-3100** or email quality@sfpuc.org.

General Lead Exposure:

San Francisco residents may also call the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Branch which strives to promote health and quality of life in San Francisco by ensuring healthy living and working conditions in the City and County of San Francisco.

Please call **(415) 252-3800** if you are concerned that a young child may be exposed to lead hazards, such as lead paint.

WE'RE COMMITTED TO QUALITY Our highly trained chemists, technicians and inspectors consistently monitor the water we serve—throughout our system, every day of the year. For additional information and materials, please visit sfpuc.gov/waterquality. For questions about YOUR water, please call 311. You can also visit sf311.org. **FOLLOW US! @MYSFPUC**

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CONSUMER RESOURCES: REGULATION/HEALTH

USEPA'S SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE [800-426-4791](tel:800-426-4791)



USEPA LEAD INFORMATION

epa.gov/your-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water



USEPA LEAD AND COPPER RULE

epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule



SWRCB

waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/lead-copper-rule



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DEODC/CLPPB/Pages/CLPPBhome.aspx



SF CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM

sf.gov/prevent-lead-poisoning-young-children



CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

cdc.gov/nceh/lead

NSF, WATER TREATMENT PRODUCTS COMPLYING WITH NSF61-G FOR LEAD



**SEARCH FOR NSF CERTIFIED DRINKING WATER
TREATMENT UNITS OR FILTERS**

nsf.org/Certified/DWTU