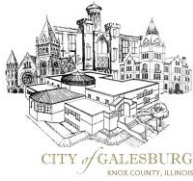


What you should know about....



LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

A Publication of the City of Galesburg Water Division

Fall 2015

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

The City of Galesburg 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.

Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the City of Galesburg are concerned about lead in your drinking water. Although most homes have very low levels of lead in their drinking water, some homes in the community have lead levels over the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), or 0.015 milligrams of lead per liter of water (mg/l). Under Federal law we have been required to have a program in place to minimize lead in your drinking water since June 7, 1993. This program includes corrosion control treatment, source water treatment, and public education. If you have any questions about how we are carrying out the requirements of the lead regulation, please give us a call at 309-345-3649. This brochure explains the simple steps you can take to protect you and your family by reducing your exposure to lead in 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 a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one 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. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry.

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 0.25 percent lead to be labeled as "lead-free."

The City of Galesburg does not have lead in its source water or water mains in the street. When water is in contact with service lines or plumbing that contains 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 in 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 309-345-3649 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.
6. **Get your child's blood tested.** Contact your local healthcare 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.** Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 0.25% lead to be labeled as "lead-free." Visit the website at www.nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

What Happened? What is Being Done?

In 1992, the City of Galesburg initially tested sixty homes for lead levels in drinking water. These homes were selected based on the plumbing material, either having a lead water service and/or lead-based solder. Of these sixty homes more than 10% exceeded the EPA action level of 15 ppb. Test results from these sixty homes indicated the main source of lead in the drinking water was the lead water service.

In 1993, the City began adding a phosphate inhibitor in an effort to reduce the lead levels in drinking water. The treatment process has been effective in reducing the lead levels significantly. This effort has resulted in lead compliance since 2010. But in 2015 we once again exceeded the lead action level by a narrow margin. Because of this exceedance the City is required to collect water samples from sixty homes every six months until the lead action level is not exceeded by more than 10% of these homes. During this time the City will continue to add phosphate inhibitor to further reduce lead levels in drinking water.

You may have a lead water service. The lead water service is the responsibility of the property owner but the City offers some incentives for water service replacement. To find out more about lead water service replacement or to find out if you have a lead water service call us at 309-345-3649.

For more information

Call us at 309-345-3649 or visit our Web site at www.ci.galesburg.il.us . For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.

Public Water Supply: City of Galesburg
Facility Number: IL0950200