

Lead in Drinking Water in Child Care Settings

WAYS TO REDUCE CHILDREN’S EXPOSURE

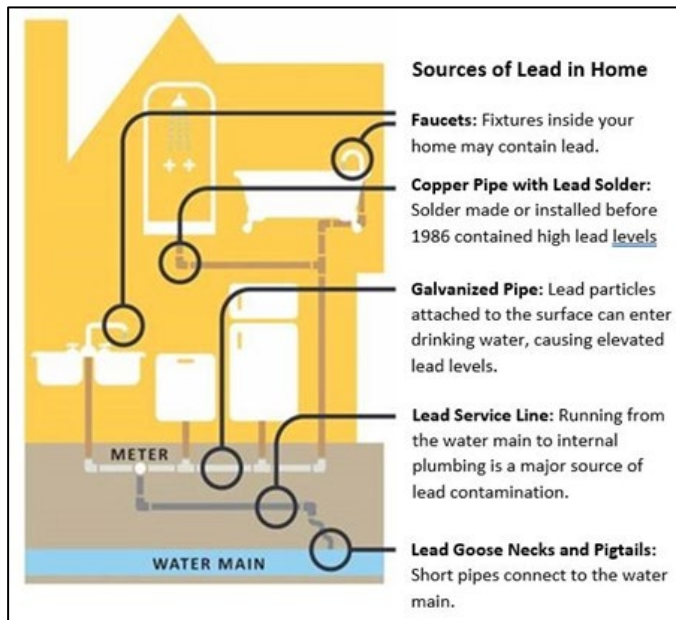
As a provider of child care services for Minnesota’s children, you value their healthy development. This information sheet provides general information about reducing lead in drinking water.

- Child Care Centers in Minnesota are required to test and report results for lead in drinking water and must have started no later than July 1, 2024.
- Family or At-Home providers are not required to test for lead, but it is recommended.
- 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.



Water that is unused and remains in the plumbing for a long time may contain higher levels of lead. Lead does not come from the water provided by your water supplier—it typically comes from corrosion of household plumbing. Water alone does not typically cause elevated blood lead levels but contributes to overall lead exposure. Lead exposure from water is easily reduced by taking simple precautions. The largest sources of lead are from lead paint, and lead dust. 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.

- 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. 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.
- If tests are at or above 5 ppb reduce lead by removing sources of lead from your plumbing or using treatment. Learn more about [Home Water Treatment Facts](#); and

Providing routine maintenance.

- Aerators at the end of faucets are 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

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 centers 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.
- Filters and other point-of-use devices may be used to remove lead. To reduce lead, make sure devices 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>)

[Home Water Treatment Facts](#)

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

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

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

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