



Lead in Drinking Water – Frequently Asked Questions

What Happened?

The Englewood Water District must sample a pool of thirty (30) homes triennially to determine that at least 90 percent of homes served are below the 0.015 mg/l Lead Action Level. Four (4) homes have tested slightly higher than the action level, which triggers some additional testing.

Are there Lead Pipes in the Distribution System?

Neither our Distribution system, nor service lines, are made of lead. When water is in contact with pipes or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Additionally, our water does not contain lead and is tested according to strict State guidelines and procedures.

What are the 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, and cosmetics. Other sources of lead include exposures in the workplace and exposure from certain hobbies (lead dust can be carried on clothing and shoes.) Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry. Everyone, especially children, should be encouraged to regularly wash their hands to reduce lead dust exposure.

Why is there lead in my drinking water?

Lead is not usually found in water that comes from wells or water treatment plants. More commonly lead can enter drinking water when the water comes in contact with plumbing materials such as lead pipes or lead solder, or when it comes in contact with faucets, valves, and other components made of brass (brass may have lead in it). This interaction is referred to as corrosion.

Even though your public water supplier may deliver water that meets all federal and state standards for lead, you may end up with elevated lead levels in your drinking water because of the plumbing in your home.

What is Englewood Water District doing about it all?

Our water system is working to educate the public about steps for reducing exposure to lead in drinking water and the health risks associated with exposure to lead. In addition, our water system is conducting a number of activities aimed at reducing high lead levels and exposures. Corrosion Control Optimization and expanded testing to sixty (60) homes for two (2) consecutive six (6) month monitoring periods will begin January 2021.

What can I do to make my water safer?

Flush your pipes before drinking, and only use cold water for cooking and drinking. The more time water has been sitting in your home's pipes, the more lead it may contain. Anytime the water in a particular faucet has not been used for six hours or longer, "flush" your cold-water pipes by running the water until it becomes as cold as it will get. This could take as little as five to thirty seconds if there has been recent heavy water use such as showering or toilet flushing. Otherwise, it could take two minutes or longer.

TIP: If you are considering replacing lead containing plumbing fixtures, keep in mind that plumbing fixtures labeled lead-free may have up to 8% lead.

****Please note that flushing may not be effective in high-rise buildings.****

Use only water from the cold-water tap for drinking, cooking, and especially for making baby formula. Hot water is likely to contain higher levels of lead.

You may also consider using a lead reducing filter tested and certified by an independent third party.

What will lead do to me or my family?

Lead is a toxic metal that is harmful to human health when it is ingested or inhaled. The greatest risk is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Small amounts slow down normal mental development in growing children and alter the development of other organs and systems. The effects of lead on the brain are associated with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure are more likely to be affected by low levels of lead than the general population. Lead is stored in the bones allowing it to be released even after exposure stops. The presence in bone increases the concern for exposure at all points of the life cycle.

EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of human exposure to lead may come from lead in drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula prepared with tap water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Does boiling water remove lead?

No, boiling water does not remove lead. Boiling water can concentrate lead levels and increase the amount of lead in water.

If I boil water for making formula, will it increase or remove lead?

Boiling water will concentrate lead levels, which can increase the amount of lead in the water. Always flush your faucet and use water from the cold water tap when making formula.

Why can't I use hot water from the tap for drinking, cooking, or making baby formula?

Hot water dissolves lead more quickly than cold water and is therefore more likely to contain greater amounts of lead. Never use water from the hot water tap for drinking, cooking, or making baby formula.

Will my filter remove lead?

Some filters can remove lead from drinking water. If you use a filter, be sure to get one that is tested and certified by an independent third party per the standards developed by NSF International. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality.

My neighbors got their water tested and found lead. Is my water safe/are my test results accurate?

Each home should be tested separately for lead. Lead usually gets into drinking water through contact with plumbing materials such as lead pipes or lead solder, or faucets, valves, and fixtures made of brass (brass contains some lead). Since each home has different plumbing pipes and materials, test results are likely to be different for each home.

Can I get my water tested for lead?

Yes. The Englewood Water District will test your tap water free of charge. Please call 941-474-3217 to schedule a time to pick-up a sampling bottle and collection procedures. Homes built BEFORE 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes or lead solder. Since you cannot see, taste, or smell lead dissolved in water, testing is the only sure way of telling whether there are elevated levels of lead in your drinking water. You should be particularly suspicious if your home has lead pipes (lead is a dull gray metal that is soft enough to be easily scratched with a house key), if you see signs of corrosion (frequent leaks, rust-colored water, stained dishes, or laundry), or if your non-plastic plumbing is less than five years old. Testing is especially important in high-rise buildings where flushing may not be effective.

What do you mean when you say the Action Level has been exceeded?

The action level for lead is a level at which the regulatory agency is concerned about corrosion and requires water systems to take additional steps to protect users of the water. Our water system is required to notify the public when our test results show levels of lead above the 15 ppb action level in >10% of samples collected.

Is there anything else I can do beyond flushing my tap or buying bottled water? Test your water first to determine whether your water has elevated levels of lead. If there is lead in your water, you may want to consider buying a water filter to lower lead levels. Replacing pipes and fixtures with products certified against NSF/ANSI Standard 61 can lower lead levels. In addition, be sure to clean all water outlet screens regularly to remove small sediments that may contain lead.

Where can I get more information on lead?

For more information, visit www.epa.gov/lead or call EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791. Your state or local public health department will also be able to provide information about lead.