

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

The Northside Water System, serving the Townships of Dalton, Fruitland, Laketon and Muskegon Charter (north of the Muskegon River), found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. Please read this notice closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

This notice is brought to you by the Muskegon County Regional Water System – Northside Water System, Water Supply Serial Number 04577. Date: November 28, 2011

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, 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).

New faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised or labeled as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free." However, plumbing fixtures labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified may only have up to 2 percent lead. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

The Northside Water System and City of Muskegon Water Filtration Plant **do not** use materials known to contain lead in the treatment or distribution systems. The Northside Water System **does not** have any detectable lead in its source water or water mains based on test results. However, when water is in contact for several hours with house service lines or plumbing that contains lead, lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New homes may also have lead; even "lead-free" plumbing may contain some lead. In addition to plumbing fixtures containing lead, homes may have copper piping joined together using lead-containing 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 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. This flushes potentially lead-containing water from the pipes.
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 levels.
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. **Get your child tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.
6. **Test your water for lead.** Call us at 231-724-6411 to find out how to get your water tested for lead. Although Muskegon County does not provide free water testing for lead, we can provide information on testing labs that provide this service for a fee. If your home/building meets certain criteria, it may be eligible to serve as a lead monitoring sample location for the water system.
7. **Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.** New faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised or labeled as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8% lead to be labeled as "lead free." Visit the National Sanitation Foundation Web site at www.nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

What Happened? What is Being Done?

Certain homes and buildings on the Northside Water System have been sampled triennially (once every 3 years) for lead according to Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) criteria that target locations that likely have older water service lines and/or plumbing fixtures that may contain lead. These locations are sampled by the occupants/owners after water has sat in the home/building water service line and plumbing for a minimum of six hours with no flushing of the service line before sample collection. This protocol attempts to represent a "worse case" scenario for lead from service lines and plumbing to enter the water.

During sampling performed in September 2011, one sample collected at a business that uses lead materials in its operation on a daily basis had a level above the MDEQ/EPA allowable action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb). The single detection above the MDEQ/EPA action level caused the lead 90th percentile to exceed the action level which resulted in this public education notice being issued.

The Northside Water System is increasing both the sampling frequency and the number of sampling sites to address high lead levels and demonstrate optimized corrosion control.

For More Information

Call us at 231-724-6411 or visit our Web site at:

www.co.muskegon.mi.us/publicworks/watersystems/waterquality.htm. 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.