



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Important Information About Lead in Your Drinking Water

The West Slope Water District is a participant with the Portland Water Bureau in a regional joint monitoring program that 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.

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 the 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.



West Slope Water District
3105 SW 89th
Portland, OR 97225

WSWD Customer Service:
503-292-2777

www.wswd.org



Portland Water Bureau
1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Room 600
Portland, OR 97204

Portland Customer Service:
503-823-7770

Portland Water Line:
503-823-7525

TTY: 503-823-6868

www.portlandoregon.gov/water

To help ensure equal access to City programs, services, and activities, the City of Portland will provide translation, reasonably modify policies/procedures and provide auxiliary aids/services/alternative formats to persons with disabilities. For accommodations, translations and interpretations, complaints, and additional information, contact 503-823-7525, use City TTY 503-823-6868, or use Oregon Relay Service: 711.

Una traducción de este folleto está disponible en: www.portlandoregon.gov/water/leadbrochure. Si tiene preguntas sobre el plomo en el agua, quiere analizar su agua de forma gratuita o tiene preocupaciones sobre los peligros del plomo, llame a **LeadLine**, al **503-988-4000**. Hay intérpretes disponibles.

Important Information About Lead in Household Plumbing and Your Drinking Water



Easy Steps to Reduce Exposure to Lead



Sources of Lead

Lead is commonly found in a variety of places throughout our environment. While lead is rarely found in our source waters and **there are no known lead service lines in the water system**, lead can be found in some homes. Lead enters drinking water from the corrosion (wearing away) of household plumbing materials containing lead. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe – commonly used in **homes built or plumbed between 1970 and 1985** – and brass components and faucets. Lead in household plumbing can dissolve into drinking water when water sits in those pipes for several hours, such as overnight or after returning from work or school.

In the Portland Metro Area, the most common sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint, household dust, soil, and plumbing materials. Lead is also found in other household objects such as toys, cosmetics and pottery.



Protecting Public Health

The Portland Water Bureau (PWB):

- **Reduces** corrosion of lead in plumbing by increasing the pH of the water. This pH adjustment has reduced lead in tap water by more than half.
- **Removes** known sources of lead from the system. All known lead service connections (pigtailed) were removed from the system by 1998.
- **Replaces** large meters with lead components that serve water to at-risk populations. For more than ten years all replacement meters have been lead-free.

Easy Steps for Reducing Lead Exposure from Drinking Water:

- 1 Run your water to flush the lead out.** If the water has not been used for several hours, run each tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes or until it becomes colder before drinking or cooking.
- 2 Use cold, fresh 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.
- 4 Consider using a filter.** Check whether it reduces lead – not all filters do. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality. Contact NSF International at **800-NSF-8010** or **www.nsf.org** for information on performance standards for water filters.
- 5 Test your child for lead.** Ask your physician or call the **LeadLine** to find out how to have your child tested for lead. A blood lead level test is the only way to know if your child is being exposed to lead.
- 6 Test your water for lead.** Contact the **LeadLine** to find out how to get a **FREE** lead-in-water test.
- 7 Regularly clean your faucet aerator.** Particles containing lead from solder or household plumbing can become trapped in your faucet aerator. Regularly cleaning every few months will remove these particles and reduce your exposure to lead.
- 8 Consider buying low-lead fixtures.** As of January 2014, all pipes, fittings and fixtures are required to contain less than 0.25% lead. When buying new fixtures, consumers should seek out those with the lowest lead content.

Twice each year the Portland Water Bureau regionally monitors for lead and copper in tap water from more than 100 homes in the Metro Area. These are homes where the plumbing is known to contain lead solder and represent a worst-case scenario for detecting lead in drinking water. Recent monitoring results from 14 of 112 homes monitored in the Metro Area exceeded the regulatory level for lead in drinking water.

Resources to Reduce Your Exposure

In addition to reducing lead exposure in drinking water, the Portland Water Bureau, through the **LeadLine**, supports programs to reduce all sources of exposure to lead:

- Lead poisoning prevention workshops
- Programs to reduce hazards in eligible homes
- FREE childhood blood lead level testing
- FREE lead-in-water test kits to its customers

For More Information:

Call the **PWB** at **503-823-7525**,
or visit their website at
www.portlandoregon.gov/water.
For more information on reducing
lead exposure around your home/
building and the health effects
of lead, contact the
LeadLine at
503-988-4000,
visit their website at
www.leadline.org,
visit EPA's website at
www.epa.gov/lead or contact
your health care provider.