

LET'S GET THE LEAD OUT!



Is Lead in Your Plumbing?

Today, there's growing awareness that some homes have lead in water pipes, fixtures and plumbing. Lead presents health concerns for people of all ages, particularly pregnant women, infants and young children. In children, low exposure levels have been linked to learning disabilities, behavioral problems and other issues.

You may be at risk for lead exposure if you live in an unrenovated home built before 1950 with lead service or in a home built between 1983 and 1986 when lead solder was being used for new plumbing. Lead solders, pipe fittings and brass fixtures can be potential problems.

Where water meets lead

The water leaving the treatment plant and traveling through water mains is almost always free of lead. However, lead is sometimes present in pipes connecting (also known as laterals) older homes to the water system, or in fixtures and home plumbing. Our utility adjusts the water's chemistry at the treatment plant to minimize the possibility of lead dissolving into the water, but there are additional steps you can take at home.

What You Can Do

Have your water tested

You can contact a certified laboratory to have your water tested for lead. The Erie County Department of Health Public Health Laboratories at 503 Kensington Ave., Buffalo, NY, will test your water for a nominal fee. The laboratory can be reached at 716-898-6100.

The Erie County Water Authority will be part of a 2022 Lead and Copper Study, overseen by the Erie County Department of Health, the New York State Department of Health and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). If you call the Erie County Water Authority at 716-849-8444, you may be included in the study at no cost to you. If you apply too late to be part of the 2022 study, your contact information will remain on file if you wish to participate in a future study.



Find out if you have a lead service line

You may be able to determine on your own if you have lead service in your home. Service lines typically enter the home in the basement or crawl space. If the pipe is lead, it will have a dull finish that shines brightly when scratched with a key or coin. Using a magnet can also help you identify a lead pipe. Even a strong magnet will not cling to lead.

Protect Your Household

There are steps you can take right away to reduce the possibility of lead in your water:

■ Run the Tap Before Use

Lead levels are likely at their highest when water has been sitting in the pipe for several hours. Clear this water from your pipes by running the cold water for several minutes which allows you to draw fresh water from the water main. You can use this water on house plants or to flush toilets.



■ Clean Aerators

Aerators are small attachments at the tips of faucets which regulate the flow of water. They can collect small particles of lead in their screens. It's a good idea to remove your aerators at least monthly and clean them out.



■ **Use Cold Water**– Begin with cold water for drinking, cooking or preparing baby formula, because hot water dissolves lead more quickly.

■ **Filter the Water**– Many home water filters are effective at removing lead. If you purchase a filter, make sure it is certified for lead removal and that you maintain it properly. Find out more on filter certification at www.nsf.org.



Let's Get the Lead Out!

The surest way to protect against lead in water is to get the lead out altogether.

■ **Replace lead service lines**

If you have a lead service line, talk to a licensed plumber about getting it replaced.

■ **Replace other plumbing that contains lead**

We recommend you use an experienced, certified plumber to look for and replace lead fittings, fixtures or other potential sources of lead.



For More Information

There are a number of resources available for more information about lead, water filtration systems and other related issues.

CDC–Lead in Drinking Water–The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has information on lead's health effects and tips for protection from water and other common sources of exposure. www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead

Drinktap.org–A public service of the American Water Works Association, drinktap.org was created to provide people information about a variety of water-related issues, from water quality to conservation.

Epa.gov/lead–The federal agency responsible for the safety of America's drinking water, EPA hosts a comprehensive website that addresses all sources of lead in the home.

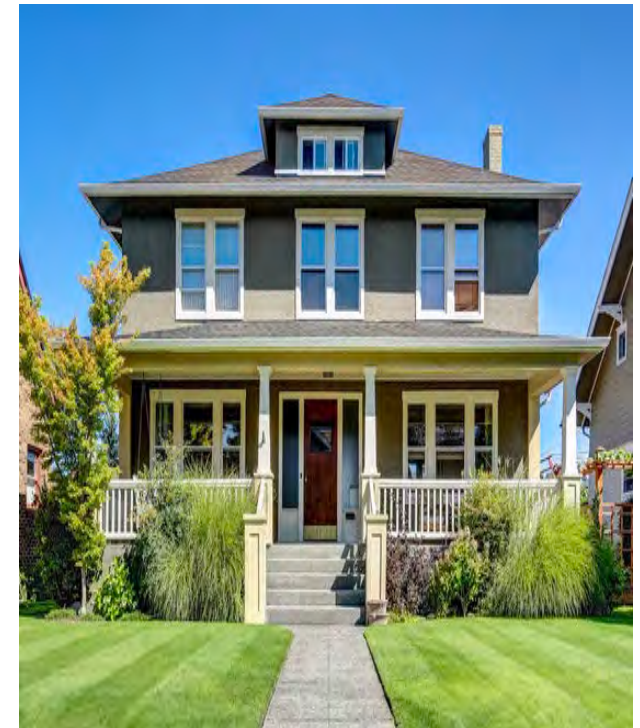
Nsf.org–NSF International provides consumer information about water filter capabilities, including claims to reduce lead. The NSF can also be reached at 800.NSF.8010.

No one knows more about your water supply than the Erie County Water Authority. For more information, call 716-849-8484 or visit www.ecwa.org.

Lead

Keep Your Water Safe

**Test Your Water
Check Pipes and Plumbing
Protect Your Family
Get the Lead Out!**



Erie County Water Authority
295 Main Street, Room 350
Buffalo, New York 14203-2494
Telephone: 716-849-8484