

Health Effects of Lead

Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney or nervous system problems.

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water

- **Use your filter properly.** Using a filter can reduce lead in drinking water. If you use a filter, it should be certified to remove lead. Read any directions provided with the filter to learn how to properly install, maintain, and use your cartridge and when to replace it. Using the cartridge after it has expired can make it less effective at removing lead. Do not run hot water through the filter. For more information on facts and advice on home water filtration systems, visit EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/home-drinking-water-filtration-fact-sheet> and EPA's [Consumer Tool for Identifying Drinking Water Filters Certified to Reduce Lead](#).
- **Clean your aerator.** Regularly remove and clean your faucet's screen (also known as an aerator). Sediment, debris, and lead particles can collect in your aerator. If lead particles are caught in the aerator, lead can get into your water.
- **Use cold water.** Do not use hot water from the tap for drinking, cooking, or making baby formula as lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Boiling water does not remove lead from water.
- **Run your water.** The more time water has been sitting in your home's pipes, the more lead it may contain. Before drinking, flush your home's pipes by running the tap, taking a shower, doing laundry, or doing a load of dishes. The amount of time to run the water will depend on whether your home has a lead service line or not, as well as the length and diameter of the service line and the amount of plumbing in your home. Residents may contact us at 518-563-1188 for recommendations about flushing times in their community.
- **Learn what your service line material is.** Contact us at 518-563-1188 or a licensed plumber to determine if the pipe that connects your home to the water main (called a service line) is made from lead, galvanized, or other material. To find out about what we are doing to replace lead service lines, please visit www.cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov or contact us at **518-563-1188**. [Protect Your Tap: A quick check for lead](#) is EPA's on-line step by step guide to learn how to find lead pipes in your home.
- **Learn about construction in your neighborhood.** Contact us at **518-563-1188** to find out about any construction or maintenance work that could disturb your service line. Construction may cause more lead to be released from a lead service line if present.
- **Have your water tested.** Contact us at **518-563-1188** to have your water tested and to learn more about the lead levels in your drinking water.