

Important Information About Lead in Drinking Water



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What We Are Doing About Lead In Drinking Water

As your water supplier, our goal is to deliver water which is non-corrosive, meaning water with a low potential of causing lead to leach from internal plumbing materials. Since 1992, we have monitored drinking water lead levels throughout our system at homes with internal plumbing materials known to contain lead. All previous monitoring results supported that our water was sufficiently non-corrosive. Beginning in 2010, we found through our monitoring program lead levels at certain homes higher than in previous years. As a result, we are taking a number of steps to address these findings. While we are looking into this matter, we will monitor lead more often at more locations and educate all of our customers about the importance of taking steps to reduce potential exposure to lead in drinking water.



Do you know that laboratory test results for lead in drinking water are reported in very small amounts - parts per billion? The level of lead in 90% of all homes monitored must be less than or equal to 15 parts per billion to comply with the lead regulation.

At the Bangor Water District, our mission is to protect public health by providing high quality water for domestic and fire protection purposes while emphasizing cost control, innovation, and customer service.

**This notice is brought to you by
the Bangor Water District.
Water System ID# 90110, August 2011**

Lead Monitoring Program

The Bangor Water District has a lead monitoring program to protect the health of all customers. Lead in drinking water is monitored to ensure that guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are not exceeded. The Bangor Water District only recently found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes and buildings in its system. Please keep in mind that the types of homes tested are those known to have lead solder. Results represent a "worst case scenario" of water that has been in contact with the household plumbing for 6-10 hours without use. While more is being done to address this situation, customers will be provided with this and other lead related information so that everyone can understand the importance of reducing exposure to lead in drinking water. Please read this notice closely and contact us for more information about our lead monitoring program.

For More Information

Please call us at **(207) 947-4516 ext. 409** with any questions or comments you may have. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead, call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD, or contact your health care provider.

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Important Information About Lead In Drinking Water

The Bangor Water District found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes and 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.**

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.

Lead Could Be Anywhere

When thinking about lead in drinking water, it is important to understand that lead is found in many parts of our daily environment. It can be found in lead-based paint, soil, household dust, food, and certain types of pottery, porcelain, and pewter. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 80% or more of a person's total exposure to lead comes from sources other than drinking water. This brochure is provided to explain the simple steps that everyone can take to reduce their exposure to lead in drinking water.

Sources Of Lead In Drinking Water

Test results show that lead is **not found** in the source of supply for the Bangor Water District, Floods Pond. Lead is also **not found** in the treated water, and the distribution pipes that carry water to homes and businesses are made from materials that **do not** add lead to water. Common sources of lead in drinking water are household plumbing components such as lead solder (used to join pipes) and some brass faucets. The corrosion or wearing away of these lead-based materials can add lead to water, but using the water more often will reduce the chances of lead leaching into the water. When water has sat in the pipes for a long time, it is a good practice to flush the water for a few minutes before using it for drinking or cooking.



Even though the use of lead solder was banned in the U.S. by 1986, it still might be present in older homes.

Steps You Can Take To Reduce Your Exposure To Lead In Drinking Water

Run Water To Flush Out Any Lead

Whenever your water has not been used for several hours, run the cold water tap for 2-3 minutes before using it for drinking or cooking. This easy practice will flush away any lead-containing water from the pipes.



Use Cold Water For Cooking And Preparing Baby Formula

Lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap or use water from the hot water tap to prepare baby formula. Use water from a flushed cold water tap and heat it in the microwave or on the stovetop.

Do Not Boil Water To Remove Lead

Boiling your water will not reduce or remove any lead.



Additional Steps You May Consider



Buying Bottled Water

The cost of flushing your cold water tap for 2-3 minutes before use is estimated to cost less than one penny per flush. We recommend this easy and cost-effective practice as the best way to reduce your potential exposure to lead in drinking water. You may, however, prefer to purchase bottled water for your drinking water needs.

Installing A Water Filtration System

You may be interested in installing a water filtration system to remove lead from your drinking water. If so, please be advised that some water filtration systems do not remove dissolved lead which is the major source of concern. Before purchasing a filter, we recommend that you contact an independent testing agency such as the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) at **1-877-867-3435** or **www.nsf.org** for advice on which products effectively remove dissolved lead. Keep in mind that simply running the cold water tap for a few minutes, as described above, is more cost-effective than installing filtration.

Be Mindful Of Other Lead Sources

There are many exposures to lead in our environment. Lead-based paint is especially dangerous once it has peeled and broken down into paint chips and dust. Children have the highest risk for ingesting lead and may contact it in dirt, dust, and paint chips. For this reason, it is important to wash children's hands and toys often. You may also consider having your child's blood checked for lead. If so, please consult your pediatrician.

Test Your Water For Lead

Contact us to find out how to get your water tested for lead. The Bangor Water District can provide a list of laboratories certified to test lead in drinking water. An average cost per test is \$30. Test results will give you an understanding of how much lead may be dissolving into your water over a non-use period of 6-10 hours.

Replace Plumbing Components

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves may contain lead. In an effort to remove potential sources of lead from your home, you may consider your options to replace plumbing fixtures which may contribute lead to your drinking water. When choosing new fixtures, carefully review product labels referencing lead content. Please note that plumbing fixtures with up to 8% lead can be legally sold in the U.S. It is advisable to purchase products with a National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) seal indicating a *"weighted average lead content of ≤0.25%"*. This means that the product has a very low lead content of less than one quarter of one percent. When having someone else replace plumbing in your home, make sure that all of the new components have the lowest possible lead content and that only lead-free solder is used to join pipes.