Why am I receiving this brochure?

Boston's water quality sampling taken of 25 homes during the fall of 2021 found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in 4 homes.

To monitor lead levels, Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) is required to test tap water in homes that are known to have lead. These homes are usually older homes that may have lead service lines or lead solder, and are intentionally tested after water has been sitting overnight. The EPA rule requires that 90% of these worst case samples must have lead levels below the Action Level of 15 ppb. You are receiving this brochure to provide information to you and your household about what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

Health Effects of Lead

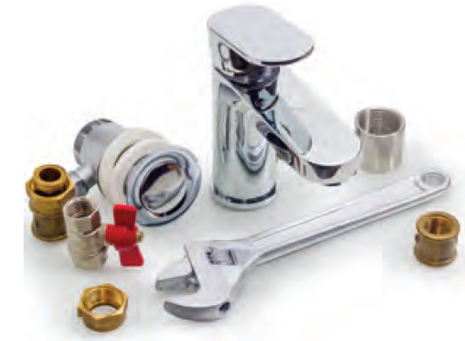
Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, 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.

Sources of Lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Common sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint, household dust, soil, and some plumbing materials including faucets purchased before January 2014. Lead can also be found in other household items such as pottery, make-up, toys, and even food. Lead paint was outlawed in 1978, but dust from homes that still have lead paint is the most common source of exposure to lead. Therefore, make sure to wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

The water provided by MWRA is lead-free when it leaves the reservoirs. Local distribution pipes that carry the water to your community are made mostly of iron and steel and therefore do not add lead to water. However, lead can get into tap water through a lead service line (if your home has one), lead solder used in plumbing, and older brass fixtures. Even though the use of lead solder was banned in the U.S. in 1986, it still might be present in older homes. The corrosion or wearing away of these lead-based materials can add lead to tap water, particularly if water sits for a long time in the pipes before use. Therefore, water that has been sitting in household pipes for several hours, overnight, or after returning from work or school, is more likely to contain lead. If high levels of lead are found in drinking water, the water may contribute 20 percent or more of a person's exposure to lead. Infants who consume formula mixed with water containing lead can receive up to 60 percent of their exposure from water.



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

Fresh water is better than stale: If your water has been sitting for several hours, run the water until it is consistently cold before drinking or cooking with it. For most residences, about two minutes should be sufficient. However, flushing times depend on whether your home has a lead service line and its length. Residents should contact BWSC to discuss building- or home- specific flushing times.

Test your child for lead: Contact your local health department or your health care provider to find out how you can get your child tested. A blood lead level test is the only way to know if your child is being exposed to lead. For more information, contact the state Department of Public Health at 1-800-532-9571 or search MDPH for lead.

Test your home for lead: The only way to determine the level of lead in drinking water at your home is to have the water tested by a state certified laboratory. The cost to test is usually between $20 and $50. A list of labs is available on-line at www.mwra.com or call (617) 242-5323. Consider having your paint tested also.

Use cold, fresh water for cooking and preparing baby formula: Do not cook with, drink, or make baby formula with water from the hot water tap. Lead dissolves more easily into hot water.

Identify if your plumbing or fixtures contain lead: If your home has a lead service line (the pipe connecting your house to the water main in the street), consider replacing it to reduce the possibility of elevated lead levels. Call the BWSC Lead Hotline at 617-989-7888 to find out about the Lead Incentive Replacement Program. Faucets purchased before 2014 may also contribute lead to drinking water. For more information contact www.mwra.com.

Do not boil water to remove lead: Boiling water will not reduce lead.

Consider using a filter: If your water contains lead, you may want to consider using a filter. Make sure the filter you are considering removes lead – not all filters do. Be sure to replace filters in accordance with manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality. Contact NSF International at 1-800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for more information on water filters. Also, if you are considering using bottled water, note that it may cost up to 1,000 times more than tap water. Simply flushing your tap, as described above, is usually a cheaper, equally effective alternative.

What is being done to control lead in the drinking water?

MWRA and BWSC are concerned about lead in your drinking water. We have an extensive testing program and treat the water to make it less corrosive. Starting in 1996, MWRA increased the pH and buffering capacity of the water, and has steadily fine-tuned these levels to further reduce the leaching of lead into drinking water. Due to this treatment change, lead levels found in sample tests of tap water have dropped around 90 percent since 1992. Although most homes have very low levels of lead in their drinking water, some homes may still have lead levels above the EPA Action Level of 15 parts per billion (ppb).

Because lead levels in home plumbing can vary, individual homes and communities may occasionally have higher test results. In the fall of 2021, Boston results in 4 out of 25 homes tested were 17.4 ppb (parts per billion), above the Action Level of 15 ppb. BWSC has increased the number of investigations and removals with the goal of identifying and removing all lead water service pipes in the city. This year, BWSC has replaced over 400 lead service lines through our Lead Replacement Incentive Program.

Up until January 2014, Federal law allowed brass fixtures such as faucets to contain up to 8% lead. Faucets sold after then are essentially lead free and will not contribute lead to drinking water. Replacing an older faucet is one way to reduce the potential for elevated lead levels in your drinking water. You can also run the water to flush out any water in contact with the older brass faucet.

BWSC Lead Replacement Incentive Program

BWSC encourages Boston's property owners to replace private lead water services through its Lead Incentive Replacement Program. This program provides financial assistance of up to $4000.00 towards the cost of the replacement. Residents can also look up information about a lead service line at a particular property by using the interactive Lead Service Map on the website at https://www.bwsc.org/environment-education/maproom/lead-service-map. For questions about the lead replacement incentive program contact the BWSC Lead Hotline at 617-989-7888. 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, search for MassDEP lead or MDPH lead, call 1-800-532-9751, or contact your health care provider.

This report contains very important information about your drinking water. Please translate it, or speak with someone who understands it.

Im Bericht steht wichtige Information über die Qualität des Wassers Ihrer Gemeinschaft. Der Bericht soll übersetzt werden, oder sprechen Sie mit einem Freund, der ihn gut aversteht.

Si usted desea obtener una copia de este reporte en españnol, llamenos al telefono 617-788-1190.

这份报告中有些重要的信息，讲到关于您所在社区的水的品质。请您找人翻译一下，或者请能看得懂这份报告的朋友给您解释一下。

La relazione contiene importanti informazioni sulla qualità dell'acqua della Comunità. Tra-durlo o parlarne con un amico che lo comprenda.

この資料には、あなたの飲料水についての大切な情報が書かれています。内容をよく理解するために、日本語に翻訳して読むか説明を受けてください。

O relatório contém informações importantes sobre a qualidade da água da comunidade. Tra-duza-o ou peça a alguém que o ajude a entendê-lo melhor.

इस रिपोर्ट में "पीने के पानी" के विषय पर बहुत जरूरी जानकारी दी गई है। कृपया इसका अनुवाद कीजिये, या किसी जानकार से इस बारे में पूछिये।

Sprawozdanie zawlera ważne informacje na temat jakości wody w Twojej miejscowści. Poproś kogoś o przellurnaczenie go lub porozmawiaj z osobą która je dobrze rozumie.

របាយការណ៍នេះមានពត៌មានសំខាន់អំពីទឹកបរិភោគ ។ សូមបកប្រែ ឬពិគ្រោះជាមួយអ្នកដែលមើលយល់ របាយការណ៍នេះ ។

يحتوي هذا التقرير على معلومات هامة عن نوعية ماء الشرب في منطقتك. يرجى ترجمته، أو ابحث التقرير مع صديق لك يفهم هذه المعلومات جيداً.

이 보고서에는 귀하가 거주하는 지역의 수질에 관한 중요한 정보가 들어 있습니다. 이것을 변역하거나 충분히 이해하시는 친구와 상의하십시오.

Η κατοθεν αναφορα παρουσιαζη σπουδαιες πληροφορειες για το ποσιμο νερο σας. Πρακακλω να το μεταφρασετε η να το σξολειασετε με καποιον που το καταλαβαινη απολητως.

Bản báo cáo có ghi những chi tiết quan trọng về phẩm chất nước trong cộng đồng quý vị. Hãy nhờ người thông dịch, hoặc hỏi một người bạn biết rõ về vấn đề này.

Ce rapport contient des informations importantes à propos de votre eau potable. Demander à quelqu'un de traduire ces informations pour vous ou discuter avec une personne qui comprend ces informations.

Boston Water and Sewer Commission
PWS ID# 3035000
617-989-7000 | www.bwsc.org

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
PWS ID# 6000000
617-242-5323 | www.mwra.com

November 2021

Important Information About Lead in Your Drinking Water