

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT 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. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Drinking water is also a possible source of lead exposure. Most sources of drinking water have no lead or very low levels of lead. Most lead gets into drinking water after the water leaves the local well or treatment plant and comes into contact with plumbing materials containing lead. These include lead pipes, and lead solder (commonly used until 1986), as well as faucets, valves, and other components made of brass. Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

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

Steps	Reason
<b><i>Run your water to flush out lead.</i></b>	If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for at least 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking. Note: You may want to capture the initial running water for uses other than drinking or cooking, such as for watering the plants.
<b><i>Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.</i></b>	Lead dissolves more easily into hot water.
<b><i>Do not boil water to remove lead.</i></b>	Boiling water will not reduce lead.
<b><i>Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.</i></b>	You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 1-800-NSF-8010 or <a href="http://www.nsf.org">www.nsf.org</a> for performance standards for water filters.
<b><i>Test your water for lead.</i></b>	Call us at [water system's phone #] to find out how to get your water tested for lead, if any fees apply, and the location of labs that perform private testing.
<b><i>Get your child tested.</i></b>	Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.
<b><i>Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead</i></b> (replace, if necessary).	Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8% lead to be labeled as "lead-free." Visit the NSF Web site at <a href="http://www.nsf.org">www.nsf.org</a> to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

***For More Information*** call us at 910-296-2123. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your health care provider.