



# LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

## *Steps to Reduce Your Exposure*

Lead exposure can be harmful to your health in a variety of ways:

- **Too much lead in your body can damage the brain and kidneys.**
- **Lead can harm the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen throughout the body.**
- **Infants and children exposed to lead may have a lowered IQ.**
- **Lead is stored in bones and can be released later in life—a fetus may receive lead from a pregnant mother which can impact brain development.**

Lead enters drinking water when lead-based pipes, solder and other household water system or plumbing components are corroded. You can protect your family by reducing the exposure to lead in drinking water:

### **Always use fresh water**

Run water for 2-3 minutes to flush lead from home plumbing. Let water become cold before using it for cooking or drinking. Do not drink or use water that has been sitting in your home's pipes for several hours.

### **Use cold water for cooking and drinking**

Do not drink or cook with hot water from the tap. Hot water can dissolve lead quicker than cold water. Instead, draw cold water from the tap then heat it using the stove. It is important to note that boiling water does not remove lead.

### **Use alternate water sources or treatment of water**

Purchasing bottled water or a water filter will help reduce the chances of lead exposure through water. Always install, maintain and replace water filters according to the product's instructions.

### **Get your child's blood lead level tested**

If you are concerned about lead exposure, contact your health department to schedule an appointment to test your child's blood for lead.

### **Find and replace plumbing containing lead**

Certain valves, fittings and faucets may contribute to lead in drinking water. Even products labeled "lead-free" may contain lead. Products with an average of 0.25% lead can claim to be "lead-free." A licensed and insured plumber can inspect pipes and other plumbing for lead.

Find your nearest health department at  
[NCHD52.org/Locations](http://NCHD52.org/Locations)

 @NCHD52

 @NCHD52