



## Testing Your Water for Lead

The Portland Water Bureau provides **FREE lead-in-water test kits to its customers.**

To order your lead-in-water test kit, please contact the **LeadLine** at [www.leadline.org](http://www.leadline.org) or **503-988-4000**.

For more information, call us at **503-823-7525**, or visit our website at [www.portlandoregon.gov/water](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water). For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, contact the **LeadLine** at **503-988-4000**, visit their website at [www.leadline.org](http://www.leadline.org), visit EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) or contact your health care provider.

For information about all lead hazards, contact the Multnomah County Health Department:

**LeadLine**  
[www.leadline.org](http://www.leadline.org)  
**503-988-4000**

- FREE lead-in-water testing
- FREE childhood blood lead level testing
- Lead poisoning prevention workshops
- Programs to reduce lead hazards in eligible homes

*The Portland Water Bureau supports these programs and the LeadLine.*

If you have questions on this material or on lead hazards, please contact the **LeadLine**, **503-988-4000**.

Si tiene preguntas acerca de este material o acerca de los peligros causados por el plomo, por favor llame a la **LeadLine** al **503-988-4000**.

Если у Вас возникли вопросы по поводу этих материалов или опасности, связанной со свинцом, пожалуйста, позвоните по телефону горячей линии **LeadLine 503-988-4000**.

Nếu có thắc mắc về bất cứ điều gì trong tài liệu này hoặc về việc nhiễm đc chì, xin liên lạc **LeadLine** tại số **503-988-4000**.

如果您对这种材料或铅物质的危险有何问题, 请拨 **503-988-4000**与 **LeadLine**联系.



### Portland Water Bureau

1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Room 600  
Portland, OR 97204

Charlie Hales, Mayor  
David G. Shaff, Administrator



Portland Water Bureau Customer Service:  
503-823-7770

Portland Water Bureau Water Line:  
503-823-7525

TTY: 503-823-6868

[www.portlandoregon.gov/water](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water)

To help ensure equal access to City programs, services and activities, the City of Portland will reasonably modify policies/procedures and provide auxiliary aids/services to persons with disabilities. Call 503-823-7404 with such requests.

# LEAD

## in Drinking Water and Household Plumbing



## How to Reduce Exposure to Lead





## Important Information About Lead in Your Drinking Water

The Portland Water Bureau found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information 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 the 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 is a common metal found throughout the environment. Common sources of lead exposure are from lead-based paint, household dust, soil and plumbing materials. Lead is also found in other household objects such as toys, cosmetics and pottery.**

Lead is rarely found in Portland's source waters, and there are no lead service lines in the distribution system. In 1998 the Portland Water Bureau removed the last known lead service connector. Today, the main sources of lead in water in the Portland area are from lead solder used to join copper pipes, and brass plumbing fixtures and components, including those advertised as "lead-free." In homes built or plumbed with copper pipes before 1985, lead solder may have been used to join the pipes. When water stands in plumbing systems that contain lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. Water that has been sitting in household pipes for several hours, such as in the morning, or after returning from work or school, is the most likely to contain lead.

If present, lead in drinking water may contribute 10 to 20 percent of a person's exposure to lead. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water. The Portland Water Bureau's corrosion treatment reduces corrosion in plumbing by increasing the pH of the water. Comparison of monitoring results with and without pH adjustment shows over 50 percent reduction in lead at the tap.

In addition to reducing lead exposure in drinking water, the Portland Water Bureau supports programs to reduce exposure to lead from all sources. In Portland, dust from paint in homes built before 1978 is the most common source of exposure to lead. Other sources include drinking water, soil, pottery, traditional folk medicines or cosmetics, toys and some occupations and hobbies. For information about these hazards and ways to reduce your exposure to all sources of lead, contact the **Multnomah County Health Department LeadLine, 503-988-4000** or [www.leadline.org](http://www.leadline.org).

## To reduce your exposure to lead from drinking water, the Portland Water Bureau encourages you to follow these easy steps:

- 1 Run your water to flush the lead out.** If the water has not been used for several hours, run each tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes or until it becomes colder before drinking or cooking.
- 2 Use cold, fresh water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
- 3 Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- 4 Consider using a filter.** Check whether it reduces lead – not all filters do. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality. Contact NSF International at **800-NSF-8010** or [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) for information on performance standards for water filters.
- 5 Test your water for lead.** Call the **LeadLine** at **503-988-4000** to find out how to get a **FREE** lead-in-water test.
- 6 Test your child for lead.** Ask your physician or call the **LeadLine** to find out how to have your child tested for lead. A blood lead level test is the only way to know if your child is being exposed to lead.
- 7 Regularly clean your faucet aerator.** Particles containing lead from solder or household plumbing can become trapped in your faucet aerator. Regularly cleaning every few months will remove these particles and reduce your exposure to lead.
- 8 Consider buying low-lead fixtures.** New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, may contribute to lead in your drinking water. Federal law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, to contain up to 8% lead. These fixtures are labeled as "lead free." When buying new fixtures, consumers should seek out those with the lowest lead content. Visit [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) to learn more about lead content in plumbing fixtures.