

## FAQs about Lead in Water

### Testing for Lead in your Water

#### How can I find the level of lead in my tap water at home?

- Visit the North Shore Health Department at 5901 N. Milwaukee River Parkway in Glendale.
- Pick up a free lead in water sample kit.
- Complete the test yourself following the provided instructions.
- Mail the sample to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene.
- Receive results and an invoice in about two weeks.



#### What is an unsafe amount of lead in tap water?

- The EPA's Maximum Contaminant Level Goal for lead is 0 ppb. No level of lead exposure is considered safe.
- The EPA's action level is 15 ppb, but public health experts recommend much lower limits, such as 1 ppb.



#### How can community members mitigate the risk of lead in their drinking water?

- Flush your pipes (take a shower, flush your toilet, wash dishes, run the laundry) before using water for drinking or cooking.
  - Flushing your pipes typically costs less than \$1 per month based on current water rates.
- Use only cold water for cooking, eating, and drinking.
- Don't boil water to remove lead, as it can concentrate lead levels.
- Use certified NSF/ANSI 53 water filters for lead removal.
- Consider replacing lead-containing plumbing components.

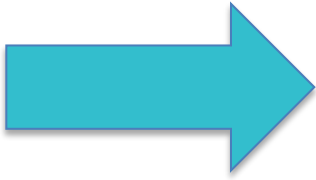
### Lead in Water Facts

- Lead is odorless, tasteless, and invisible when dissolved in water.
- Drinking water is not a common source for lead. It is estimated that drinking water contributes only 10-20% of total lead exposure. Lead from paint is the most common and dangerous.
- Hot water is more likely to contain higher levels of lead than cold water.
- Bathing and showering are safe as skin doesn't absorb lead from water.
- Watering gardens is safe for plants, but soil may contain lead contamination.
- Washing dishes and general cleaning with water that contains lead is ok.



## Testing for Lead

### Who should be tested for lead?



### More Information on Lead

- Don't forget about lead paint! Did you know that lead paint is still found in many North Shore homes?

**Wisconsin Childhood Blood Lead Testing Recommendations**

**Wisconsin recommends universal testing which includes:**

- All children at age 1 and again at age 2
- Any children between ages 3 and 5 without a previous test

These recommendations match the federal Medicaid requirement. Additional testing may be recommended in the city of Milwaukee.

Data from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development				
Home Construction Year	1978-2005	1960-1977	1940-1959	Pre-1940
Percent Containing Lead-Based Paint	3%	11%	39%	67%

- If you suspect your home has lead-based paint (especially if it's deteriorating) avoid disturbing it and hire professionals trained in safe removal practices. "Alligatoring" and paint that leaves a chalky residue when rubbed (see photos) are common signs that your paint may contain lead.
- Simple steps to reduce lead exposure:
  - Cover peeling paint (new paint, contact paper, or permanent coverings)
  - Never dry scrape old paint
  - Use a wet cloth or mop to clean (especially floors and windowsills)
  - Vacuum at least 2 times after any cleaning
  - Remove shoes before entering the house
  - Wash hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often
  - Feed children meals high in calcium, iron, and vitamin C
  - Get your home and children tested for lead
  - Renovate safely—hire lead certified technicians
- Call us at the North Shore Health Department (414) 371-2980. We are happy to assist you in identifying places to obtain a lead test and we provide follow-up services for all lead poisoned children in the North Shore.
- The Wisconsin Department of Health Services website has great information on prevention and intervention around lead exposure.

