

LEAD TESTING IN SCHOOLS – FAQs

Is lead commonly found in drinking water?

- Lead does not naturally occur in drinking water.
- Lead can be found in materials used to transport water, such as pipes or service lines. Lead can be an ideal material for colder climates, primarily on the east coast since it is more durable and can withstand freezing conditions. The combination of certain water quality (high acidity or low mineral content) coming into contact with lead service lines that do not have a protective coating can make the water corrosive. This can cause the lead from the service lines to leach into the drinking water – such as the case in Flint, Michigan. While this may be an issue in colder climates, it is uncommon for water agencies in warmer climates to use lead service lines.
- _____ does not have any lead service lines in its entire water infrastructure. Additionally, the water quality of our drinking water is very high in mineral content, which helps prevent corrosive water.

If we tested our drinking water, will we detect any lead?

- Lead is not likely to be present in the water; however, lead can exist in brass plumbing, such as the faucets of drinking fountains and spigots. Brass is a common material used for plumbing because of its high durability, malleability, and low cost. Water that passes through brass plumbing may have traces of lead, but a more detectable amount is likely to be found in water that has been sitting stagnant in the brass fixture.

Can I be assured that there is not lead in the water?

- Even if bottled water was flushed through a faucet, lead will likely be detected – the source comes from the brass faucet not the water.
- Every water agency is required to provide its consumers data on the quality of the water it serves its customers.
- _____ posts its annual Consumer Confidence Report online, which includes tests its well water for organic chemicals, minerals, metals, and bacteria. _____ is also required to test regularly for bacteria and total trihalomethanes in our distribution system. Lead and copper are also tested in tap water from selected residences.

Then, wouldn't the solution be to replace all brass fixtures in our drinking fountains and spigots?

- Replacing the brass infrastructure may not reduce lead concentrations immediately. In fact, new brass plumbing can cause higher concentrations of lead to be detected initially compared to older brass fixtures. Primarily because the lead present in older brass plumbing has leached out over the life of the plumbing fixtures while new brass, even low lead brass, will have higher concentrations of lead than older brass plumbing.

So what is the solution?

- _____ recommends that the water be flushed for 30 seconds to two minutes to eliminate any lead that may have leached into the drinking water.
- The more time water has been sitting in pipes, the more lead it may contain. When water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by simply flushing the water.