



# PREVENTING LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER



# Where is lead found in the home?



Homes built prior to 1978 often contain lead-based paint. When lead paint fails, it can chip or create dust, which can then be ingested. **This is the most common source of lead exposure in children.**

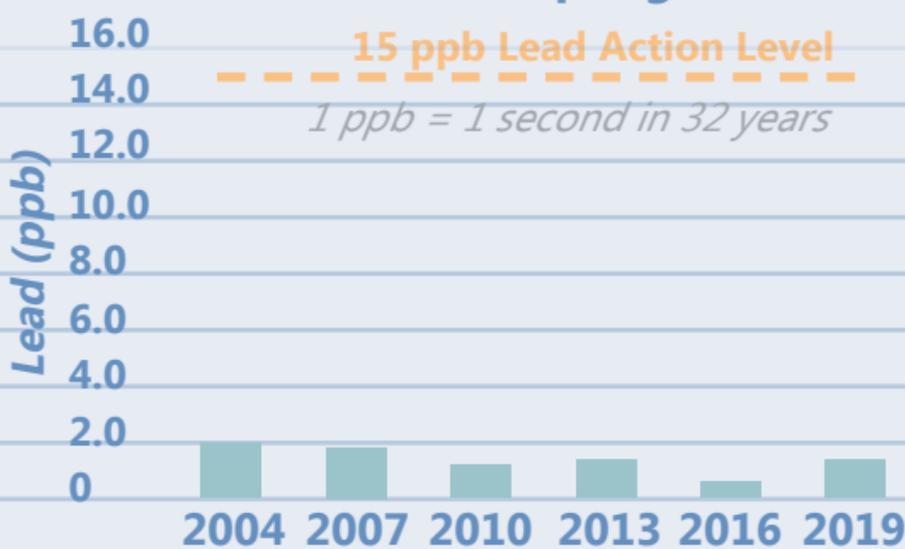


Lead pipes and service lines were common in homes until the mid-1950s. The practice was federally banned in 1986, but lead was still used for soldering for copper pipe until 1988. Brass fixtures may also contain trace amounts of lead.

## How does lead enter my drinking water?

Nashville's drinking water does not contain lead when it leaves the treatment plants, but tap water can accumulate trace amounts of lead through the corrosion of lead plumbing materials. MWS regularly tests for lead in the drinking water at a selected number of lead service line locations. The EPA requires tested levels be below 15 parts per billion (ppb).

### MWS Lead Sampling Results



*Before 2019, we were unable to detect lead in our laboratory below one part per billion, even with the best available technology. Due to advances in technology, we are now able to detect lead more precisely at parts per trillion (ppt) levels. This means that where we once would not have detected any lead, we are now able to. As a result, our 2019 analysis reflects an increase in accuracy rather than an increase in the level of lead in our water.*

# Controlling Corrosion

Since 1987, MWS has had an intense corrosion control program to prevent the possibility of lead leaching into your water. A blended phosphate solution is added to the finished water and reacts to inhibit corrosion of water mains; tie-up nuisance metals; and remove scale deposits in pipes by bonding to the walls and forming a protective barrier.

## What are the risks of lead exposure?

Lead exposure can cause adverse health effects including increases in blood pressure of some adults; delays in normal physical and mental development in babies and young children; and, deficits in the attention span, hearing, and learning abilities of children.



## Reduce Your Risk

Run your water for 3-5 minutes if it has not been used in several hours.

Always use cold water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula.

Periodically remove and clean faucet screen/aerator. While removed, run water to eliminate debris.

Identify and replace lead plumbing, including your portion of the service line that leads from the meter to your home.

Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead such as brass or bronze.

Have a licensed electrician check for connections between your wiring and your plumbing. If a connection is electrified, it can accelerate corrosion.

Boiling water will NOT reduce lead.

National Lead Information Center: 1.800.424.LEAD  
EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1.800.426.4791

**NATIONAL HOTLINES**

# TIMELINE LEAD REGULATION

Knowing when your home was built can help you determine if it's at risk for lead



**mid-1950s**

Lead is no longer used to make pipes and service lines. These materials are phased out of use.

**1955**

Around this time, Metro Water Services ends the use of lead pipes for service lines.

**1982**

Use of copper pipe with lead solder becomes common for household plumbing.

**1986**

Congress enacts "lead ban" requiring that both public water systems and anyone else who intends to install or repair drinking water plumbing connected to a public water system use "lead-free materials."

**1987**

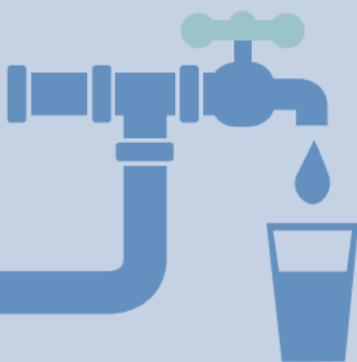
Metro Water Services begins corrosion control program to prevent lead from leaching into Nashville's drinking water.

**1988**

Use of copper pipe with lead solder for household plumbing ends.

**Jan 4, 2014**

*Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act* becomes effective, further limiting the amount of lead in brass/bronze faucets, fittings and valves.



# How do I know if I have lead plumbing?

**1.** Identify the color of your pipes. Lead pipe is generally a dull gray.



**2.** Carefully scratch the pipe with a key. If the pipe is made of lead, the area you've scratched will turn a bright silver color. *Do not use a knife or other sharp instrument and take care not to cut or puncture a hole in the pipe.*



Note that galvanized piping can also be dull gray in color. A strong magnet will typically cling to galvanized pipes, but will NOT cling to lead pipes.

## Replacing Lead Plumbing



### Our Infrastructure

MWS replaces lead pipes found in our infrastructure during repair or other construction activities, including our portion of your water service line that extends between the meter and the utility main.



### Your Home

Lead plumbing on a customer's property is not part of the public water system and is the responsibility of the property owner to replace. This includes the portion of the service line that extends from the meter to the building or residence. If your home has a lead service line, it is likely that other sources of lead exist in the home as well. MWS strongly advises that you contact a licensed plumber for any work on your service line or home plumbing.

### Certified Lead-Free Products

Replacing pipes and fixtures in your home or business as you remodel, upgrade, add-on or build new can further protect you and your family from the risks of lead exposure. When replacing pipes and other plumbing materials, the EPA recommends using products that are certified as lead free. Guidance on how to research, review and select certified lead free products can be found on their website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead).

Metro Water Services views public health as a core part of our mission. MWS consistently provides safe, reliable water services that meet or exceed all state and federal standards for public health.

## Water Quality Reports

MWS regularly tests for potential contaminants, including lead, that may be present in drinking water. The results of testing are released in an annual Consumer Confidence Report that is made available online at

**[www.nashville.gov/Water-Services/Community-Education/Lead](http://www.nashville.gov/Water-Services/Community-Education/Lead)**

Due to the proven success of our corrosion control program, in accordance with State and Federal regulation, MWS samples for lead every three years.

## Lead Testing

If you are concerned about lead pipes in your home, you can always have your water tested for lead by a certified laboratory. Since you cannot see, taste or smell lead dissolved in water, testing is the only sure way of telling whether there are harmful quantities of lead in your drinking water.

**For more information on testing your water, you can call Metro Water Services at 615.862.4600 or contact a private certified laboratory.**

## Additional Resources

### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

[www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)

1.800.426.4791

### **National Lead Information Center**

1.800.424.LEAD

### **Metro Water Services**

[www.nashville.gov/Water-Services/Community-Education/Lead](http://www.nashville.gov/Water-Services/Community-Education/Lead)

615.862.4600

