



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

TOWN OF ARLINGTON
51 Grove Street
Arlington, Massachusetts 02476
Telephone (781) 316-3104, Fax (781) 316-3281

November 22, 2019

Important Message to Residents Regarding Potential for Elevated Lead Levels in Drinking Water and How to Reduce Lead in Your Residential Service Lines

The Arlington Water Department wants all consumers to be aware of the potential for elevated lead levels in drinking water, the causes, the health effects, and what can be done to reduce or eliminate the effects or the source.

Every year, the Arlington Water Department works with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) to test water for lead levels at 15 sites that are likely to have lead components. Sites more likely to have lead include older homes that may have lead service lines or lead solder. For the test period ending September 2019, two of the sites did result in lead levels above the Action Level of 15ppb. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read the following 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 your 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. Additionally, lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child can receive lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

Sources of Lead:

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Sources of exposure are lead-based paint, household dust, soil, and some plumbing materials, including certain types of faucets. It is important to understand that the water source (MWRA reservoirs) and the water mains that distribute your water are lead-free. However, lead can get into tap water through a lead service line (the pipe that connects your home to the main in the street), lead solder typically used in plumbing prior to 1986, and some brass fixtures. The corrosion or wearing away of these lead based materials can add lead to your tap water, particularly if water sits for a long time in the pipes before use.

How to Reduce Lead Exposure:

- If your water has gone unused for more than 6 hours, run any faucet used for drinking or cooking until it is consistently cold (usually about 30 seconds to 2 minutes) before drinking or cooking with it. The flushing of your tap ensures the best quality water.
- Use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula/food for infants.
- Please note that boiling water does not eliminate lead. If there is lead in your water, boiling it will increase lead levels.

- Other steps that may be taken include installing water filters that meet the standard for effective lead reduction, identifying if your plumbing fixtures or water pipes contain lead and replacing them, and/or having your water tested.
- The Water Department will provide free water testing for any homeowner or tenant as well as an inspection of water service to determine the presence of lead. For further information, call the Arlington Water Department at 781-316-3106.
- It is also suggested that parents have their child's blood tested for lead through their health care provider.

Again, elevated levels of lead in drinking water will occur if your property has lead water pipes or components that contain lead, typically installed prior to 1986. If you are purchasing a home it is suggested that you have the water tested for lead prior to purchase. For more information on the Town's Lead and Copper program, call us at 781-316-3106 or visit our website at:

<http://www.arlingtonma.gov/water>

For further information on reducing lead exposure in your home/building and on the health effects of lead, visit the Environmental Protection Agency website at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your healthcare provider.

This is an Important message. Please have it translated

這是一個重要資訊。請把它翻譯。

Este es un mensaje importante. Por favor, traduzca.

Это важное сообщение. Пожалуйста, переведи его.