Drinking Water Lead Reduction Program - Frequently Asked Questions Distributed by the Village of West Milton, Ohio

What is the "Drinking Water Lead Reduction Program"?

The Village of West Milton – Public Water System is committed to reducing the risk of lead exposure from drinking water. We are doing all we can to protect our customers and give you information along with steps you can take to reduce your exposure. *This program includes developing an inventory of service line materials on both the municipal water service lines and the customer's water service line, replacing village owned service lines with non-lead materials such as copper and plastic, providing third-party certified pitcher filters for lead reduction, and continuing outreach and education to our customers. Just because you receive a lead notification letter does not mean that you have lead present. It means that your pipe material "could" contain lead or it has not yet been identified.*

For more information on our program, please see the section on Additional Questions below.

Lead in Drinking Water Basics -

What is lead and why is it a health concern?

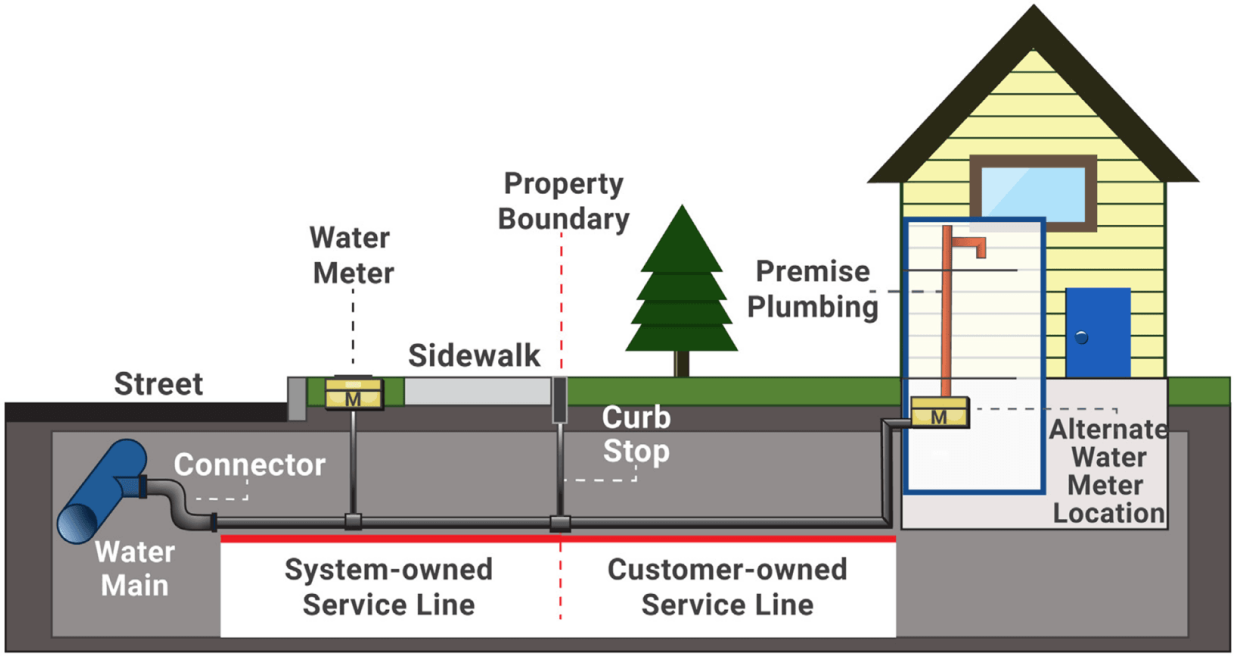
Lead is a naturally occurring element found in small amounts in the earth's crust. It is also a toxic, soft metal that can be found in paint, dust, air, soil, food, and water, and can be harmful to human health. There is no safe level of exposure to lead in drinking water. **Lead is persistent, and it can bioaccumulate in the body over time.** Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney, or nervous system problems.

How does lead get into drinking water?

Lead can enter drinking water when plumbing materials that contain lead corrode. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead and galvanized pipes, faucets, and fixtures. In homes served by lead services lines, these pipes are typically the most significant source of lead in the water. Lead can attach to the inner surface of galvanized service lines and be released into drinking water over time. Service lines made of galvanized iron or steel that are (or were previously) downstream of lead service lines are classified as galvanized requiring replacement (GRR). Identifying and ultimately removing lead and GRR service lines is an important way to protect public health.

What is a water service line?

A water service line is the pipe that connects the water main to your home or building. The line is separated into two parts. The municipal line, which is connected to the water main, and typically ends at a water shut off box (also known as a "curb stop") and the residential line that typically connects to the curb stop and travels into the home or building. Service lines may be made of copper or other materials such as galvanized iron, steel, plastic, brass, or lead. If any portion of the pipe is made of lead, it is called a lead service line (LSL). The village is not known to have many lead service lines in use, but it is possible that there are a few unidentified in the water distribution system.



Is water the only source of lead in houses and buildings?

No. While water may be a source of exposure to lead in houses and buildings, lead-based paint, dust, contaminated soil, lead-glazed pottery, and some toys and jewelry may also contain lead. Lead-based paint and lead-containing toys pose a significant risk especially for young children. For more information on protecting your family from lead in your home, please visit: https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-sources-lead.

Reducing Lead Exposure -

What can I do to reduce my exposure to lead from my drinking water?

Below are recommended actions that you may take, separately or in combination, if you are concerned about lead in your drinking water. The list is not intended to be a complete list or to imply that all actions equally reduce lead from drinking water.

Have your water tested

Contact a certified drinking water laboratory to have your water tested and to learn more about the lead levels in your drinking water. You can find this by searching: "Certified Water Testing Labs Near Me."

Run your water

The more time water has been sitting in your home's pipes, the more lead it may contain. Before drinking, flush your home's pipes by running the tap, taking a shower, doing laundry, or doing a load of dishes. The amount of time to run the water will depend on whether your home has a lead service line or not, and the length of the lead service line. To flush lead out of your water line, run cold water from the tap for 15-30 seconds before using it for drinking or cooking, especially if the water has been sitting in the pipes for several hours; this flushes out any stagnant water containing lead and replaces it with fresh water from the main line; if you suspect a lead service line, you may need to run the water for a longer period, like a couple of minutes.

Learn about construction in your neighborhood

Be aware of any construction or maintenance work that could disturb your lead service line. Construction may cause more lead to be released from a lead service line.

Use cold water

Only use cold water for cooking, drinking, and making baby formula. Hot water dissolves lead more quickly than cold water.

Clean your aerator regularly

Aerators are small attachments to faucet tips which regulate water flow. Your aerator can accumulate lead particles which can contaminate your water so it should be cleaned regularly.

Use your filter properly

If you use a filter, make sure that it is certified by a third-party certifier to *remove lead*. **Check the filter and cartridge packaging for these certifications.** Read the directions to learn how to properly install and use your cartridge and when to replace it. Using the cartridge after it has expired can make it less effective at removing lead. Do not run hot water through the filter.

Work with the Village to identify your service line material.

The village has secured a grant through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to purchase a program and software to track all public and private water lines. We have identified over 50% of public and private lines / materials but crews still have work to do. You can call (937) 698-1500 to schedule an appointment to have our staff assist you in identifying your water line pipe material. If you see crews digging in the right of way at your residence or business, chances are they are identifying the public water line material.

Get Your Child Tested to Determine Lead Levels in His or Her Blood

Your healthcare provider and Miami County Public Health Agency can provide information about how you can have your child's blood tested for lead. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that public health actions be initiated when the level of lead in a child's blood is 3.5 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL) or more.

How do I know if my home has a lead service line, GRR service line, or lead plumbing?

1) A photo has been added to this FAQ's page to show what different types of water line materials look like. If you already know your line material it is very helpful to call the village at (937) 698-1500 and advise what that material is. It will then be logged into our program. We would like to double check this at some point. You can also call, and our helpful staff may be able to provide you with information about whether you have a lead or GRR service line. Additionally, our water quality reports can also be viewed on our website which is westmiltonohio.gov under the utilities tab.

2) A licensed plumber can also assess your faucets, fixtures, and service line for lead.

3) EPA has developed an online step-by-step guide, Protect Your Tap, to help people identify lead pipes in their homes. The online tool is located at www.epa.gov/pyt

Can I shower in lead-contaminated water?

Yes. Bathing and showering should be safe for you and your children. Human skin does not absorb lead in water.

Is it safe to wash dishes and do laundry?

Yes, but dry them after. Wash dishes, bottles, and toys with soapy water. Dry before use. Lead in water will not be absorbed by porcelain, metal, or glass. Clothes washed in plain tap water will not contain enough lead to cause harm.

Additional Questions on Our Lead Reduction Program

How and when are customers being notified about the lead service line replacement program?

Letters have been mailed to customers with known galvanized OR unknown material water lines. Until these lines have been replaced or identified, the village will send a notice annually.

What is the replacement process for my lead service line?

Crews are continuing to identify public and private water line materials. Public lines are being replaced aggressively as time allows. The homeowner may contact a certified plumber and have their lines replaced at any time. If this is done, we are asking you call the office to notify us that your pipe material has changed. We will then make this change in our identification program.

Where can I go to ask questions and get more information?

For more information on lead in drinking water, visit:

https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water

For any unanswered questions please call:

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