

June 2, 2021

Dear Gaithersburg High School Community:

As part of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Drinking Water Testing Program, testing has been completed at your school, and one or more drinking water outlets contained lead concentrations at or above the Montgomery County Council Action Level (AL) of 5 parts per billion (ppb). A detailed report is available on the MCPS Drinking Water Testing Program website at the following link:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/maintenance/services/water.aspx>.

Adhering to the Maryland Department of the Environment regulations, the outlets with elevated lead concentrations were removed from service, and a remediation plan will be implemented for these outlets. Upon completion of the remediation, the outlets will be retested to verify that remediation measures were effective.

Drinking water outlets are tested on a three-year cycle.

Health Effects of Lead

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much lead enters your body from drinking water or other sources. Lead can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and it can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen throughout the body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Lead is stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the fetus receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development. 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.

Sources of Human Exposure to Lead

There are many different sources of human exposure to lead. These sources include lead-based paint; lead-contaminated dust or soil; certain plumbing materials; certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics; exposure in the work place; and exposure from certain hobbies. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water, while exposure for an infant consuming formula mixed with lead-containing water, may increase to 40 to 60 percent.

How to Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water

- Run your water to flush out lead. If water has not been used for several hours, run the water for 15 to 30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking.
- Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula: Lead from the plumbing dissolves more easily into hot water.

**Please note that boiling the water will not reduce lead levels.*

Additional Information

For additional information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA’s website at www.epa.gov/lead. If you are concerned about exposure, contact your healthcare provider to learn how to have your child tested for lead.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Brian A. Mullikin, environmental team leader, Division of Sustainability and Compliance, at 240-740-2324 or via e-mail at Brian_A_Mullikin@mcpsmd.org.

Sincerely,



Lynne M. Zárata,
Director
Division of Sustainability and Compliance