DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health
Office of Drinking Water

Important Notice: Lead Tap Water Sample Result

Public Water System Name: _____

PWSID#: _____

Dear Resident:

We appreciate your participation in the lead tap monitoring program. A lead level of _____ mg/L was reported for the sample collected on _____ at your location: _____.

Your lead tap water sample result is ***greater than* the lead action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb) or 0.015 mg/L. However, the 90th percentile value for our public water system was below the lead action level.**

What does this mean?

Under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set the action level for lead in drinking water at 15 ppb. This means utilities must ensure that water from the customer's tap does not exceed this level in at least 90 percent of the homes sampled (90th percentile value). The action level is the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow. If water from the tap does exceed this limit, then the utility must take certain steps to correct the problem.

Your lead level may be due to conditions unique to your home, such as the presence of lead solder or brass faucets, fittings and valves that may contain lead. We strongly urge you to take the steps below to reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water.

What are the 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 to 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. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

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What are the sources of lead?

The primary sources of lead exposure for most children are deteriorating lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust, and lead-contaminated residential soil. Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, some children's metal jewelry, and some traditional pottery. The EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of human exposure to lead may come from lead in drinking water. Lead is rarely found in source water, however, but enters tap water through corrosion of plumbing materials. Homes built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes or lead solder; however, new homes are also at risk. The most common problem is with brass or chrome-plated brass faucets and fixtures which can leach significant amounts of lead into the water, especially hot water. Exposure to lead is a significant health concern, especially for young children and infants whose growing bodies tend to absorb more lead than the average adult. Even if your home's drinking water lead levels were below the action level, parents should ask their health care providers about testing children for high levels of lead in the blood if they are concerned about lead exposure.

What can I do to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water?

- **Run your water to flush out lead.** If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 15-30 seconds to flush lead from interior plumbing 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.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
- **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead.
- **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.** Brass faucets, fittings, and valves may contribute lead to drinking water. Lead solder was commonly used to join copper pipes prior to 1988; it appears dull gray and becomes shiny when scratched with a key. A licensed plumber will be able to help with lead solder identification, and if needed, replacement.
- **Remove debris from plumbing materials.** Remove the faucet strainers from all taps and run the water for 3-5 minutes. Repeat this action periodically to flush out any debris that has accumulated over time.

Additional Information

Call us at _____. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead, call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD, or contact your health care provider.