

How does lead get into drinking water?

Lead is not typically found in the streams, reservoirs or wells that serve as our water supplies. The main water lines that carry water from treatment plants to customers don't contribute to lead. The main source of lead in drinking water is from lead service lines (the pipelines that deliver water from the water mains in the street to homes) and from household plumbing that contains lead.

Before the use of copper for water pipes, lead was once a material of choice. Before 1986, lead was also a key component of the solder used by plumbers when installing home plumbing. Lead is even found in brass and bronze plumbing fixtures. The chemical properties of water can cause lead and other metals to leach into the water. Water utilities, including Aqua, treat drinking water to reduce the chance for metals to leach into the water.

Customers who have, or think they might have, lead service lines are strongly encouraged to consider replacing their service lines. If customers choose to replace their household plumbing, they should use certified lead-free solder and fixtures.

How Aqua Protects Its Customers

Aqua conducts required testing for drinking water contaminants, including lead and copper, to ensure compliance with state and federal drinking water standards. Aqua tests the water at our treatment plants. Aqua also tests for lead in high-risk sample homes to comply with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) lead and copper rule. According to the EPA, sampling locations must be selected based on priority tied to possible lead exposure. Aqua also works with individual customers who request lead information for their home. Test results, including those for lead and copper, are summarized in our annual water quality reports, which are produced for every water system we own and operate. You can find your community's water quality report on AquaAmerica.com.

Changes in water sources are not common. However, if we ever need to use a new water source, Aqua works with state environmental regulators to perform an early evaluation of the new source to anticipate water quality concerns and identify potential treatment needs.

Once a new water source is approved, Aqua further verifies the acceptability of water quality by conducting testing at approved high-risk homes for a sustained period of time to ensure water quality.



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. 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.

If your home's water shows elevated levels of lead, or if you are concerned about the potential of lead in your water, here are ways you can minimize exposure.

- **Run your tap to flush out lead.** If your water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for at least 15 to 30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking.
- **Use cold water to cook and prepare baby formula. Don't boil water to reduce lead.** Lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Boiling water won't reduce lead.
- If you buy a water filter, make sure it's approved to reduce lead. You can contact NSF International at 800.NSF.8010 or [NSF.org](https://www.nsf.org).
- If you are concerned about exposure, contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead. Call Aqua at 877.987.2782 for information about testing your water for lead.
- Brass faucets, fittings and valves – even those advertised as lead free – might contribute lead to drinking water. The law allows end-use fixtures, such as faucets, with wetted surfaces containing a maximum weighted average of 0.25 percent lead to be labeled as lead free. Visit NSF International at [NSF.org](https://www.nsf.org) to learn more.

For more information on reducing lead exposure in your home and the health effects of lead, visit the EPA at [EPA.gov/lead](https://www.epa.gov/lead) or contact your healthcare provider.

