What You Need to Know About Lead and Copper in Your Drinking Water

Sources of Lead in Drinking Water

Lead and copper found in drinking water is most often the result of these metals slowly dissolving into the water from materials used in plumbing systems used to supply water, lead solder used in plumbing, some brass fixtures or household faucets. Water coming into contact with these materials can cause small amounts of metals to leach (dissolve) into the water, especially if water sits for a long time in the pipes before use.

How to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead

To reduce your potential exposure, always use fresh, cold running water for drinking and cooking. Do not use hot water for cooking and preparing baby formula. Lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Always purchase and install plumbing materials (i.e., pipes, pipe fittings, and plumbing fittings) and fixtures that are designated "lead-free." By law, this means they materials cannot contain more than 0.25 percent lead. Read the labels of any new plumbing fixtures closely. How to Determine if You Have a Lead Service Line The service line is the pipe that connects your home to the water main in the street. Some service lines that run from older homes to the utility water main may be made from lead-lined steel and materials other than copper. Over time, many of these older service lines may have been replaced. If you have concerns, a plumber should inspect the service line to make that determination

Testing for Lead and Copper in Your Drinking Water

The Lead and Copper Rule under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act requires all public water suppliers to test for lead and copper at designated locations and at a specified frequency. The rule has established "Action Levels" of 15 parts per billion (ppb) for lead and 1300parts per billion (ppb) for copper, and requires public water systems to maintain the lead and copper levels in at least 90% of the water samples below these action levels. Lead and copper sampling are conducted by collecting samples in residential homes which were constructed just prior to the 1986 ban on lead used in solder of drinking water piping. Samples are collected after the water has not been used for 6 to 8 hours. These homes are thought to have the highest potential for lead to leach into the water, and by collecting water after it has sat for an extended period of time, the lead and copper levels in the samples would be the highest of anytime during the day the test results are reported in the annual Water Quality Report, published by the Water Department. Since the start of the lead and copper program in 1993, no exceedances of the action levels for lead and copper have occurred. Based on a series of test programs dictated by the Lead and Copper Rule, the sampling requirements for most recent sampling of residential homes took place in July of 2018, and due to improper sample, we had 3 out of 20 sample sites exceed action levels. These sites were determined to have been collected from sites that the water as sat in the plumbing for an extended amount of time in one case for months. It is extremely important that Lead and copper samples be collected from **a Kitchen or bathroom** faucet that the water has sat for **6 to 8 hours**. This is the amount of time determined to be the average amount of time that water typicality sit in our household plumbing without usage.

What Can I do to Reduce Exposure to Lead and Copper in Drinking Water?

- **Run your water to flush out lead and copper.** If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
- **Use cold water** for cooking and preparing baby formula.
- **Do not boil water** to remove lead or copper.
- **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.** Brass faucets, fittings and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free", may contribute lead to drinking water. The Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act went into effect in January 4, 2014. The Act has reduced the lead content allowed in water system and plumbing products by changing the definition of lead free in Section 1417 of the Safe Drinking Water Act from not more than 8% lead content, to not more than a weighted average of 0.25% lead with respect to the wetted surfaces of pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, and plumbing fixtures. The Safe Drinking Water Act prohibits the use of these products in the installation or repair of any public water system or facility providing water for human consumption if they do not meet the lead-free requirement. It also makes I unlawful to introduce them into commerce. This includes stocked inventories and coated or uncoated brass or bronze products. Visit the NSF Website at nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

Again, the longer the water is allowed to sit in your household lines the chance for lead to dissolve into your water would be greater. Before 1986 lead was allowed to be used in your homes water piping supply lines. If you have copper lines with lead solder please follow the list guidelines and flush before use. If reasonable have a plumber inspect your plumbing and replace any plumbing fixtures that is not lead free**. If your home does not have copper lines with lead solder and has lead free plumbing fixtures then you are not at risk.**

This is a public health message supplied by Satilla Regional Water & sewer Authority.