Who is at risk from lead in drinking water?

Lead exposure can lead to very serious health problems. Pregnant women and infants are most at risk from the toxic effects of lead.

**Children:**
- Behavioral and learning problems
- Lowered IQ
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Anemia

**Pregnant women:**
- Reduced growth of fetus
- Premature birth
- Miscarriage

**Adults:**
- Increased blood pressure
- Decreased kidney and liver function
- Reproductive problems
- Seizures, fatigue, hearing loss

How much lead in drinking water is safe?

Government agencies have ‘action levels’ for lead in drinking water. If enough water samples exceed the action level, the public must be notified, and other steps must be taken. The Environmental Protection Agency has a Lead Action Level for municipal drinking water of 15 parts per billion (ppb). The Food and Drug Administration has a Lead Action Level for bottled water of 5 ppb.

However, these are not health-based standards. Scientists agree that there is no safe level of lead exposure. The safe level of lead in drinking water is 0 ppb.
Do I have a lead water service line in my home?

Locate the water service line or water main (it could be inside or outside your home)

Outdoor water meter (sidewalk, yard)
Indoor service line (basement, crawl space, garage)

Find the pipe
1-inch in diameter with a shutoff valve

With an outdoor meter, if you walk the shortest path from the meter to your home, that’s where the pipe will enter your house. Find the pipe from there.

Is the pipe made of plastic?

Yes → You do not have a lead pipe

No → Scratch the pipe with a key or coin, close to where the pipe enters the house through the walls. What color was underneath?

Silver or gray, easy to scratch

Does a magnet stick to it?

No → You have a lead pipe

Yes → Your pipe is probably galvanized steel

Silver or gray, difficult to scratch

Does a magnet stick to it?

Yes → You might have a lead pipe

No →