I Think There’s Lead in My Water. What Should I Do?

The first thing you should do is get your water tested. Even if you don’t have a lead service line, other fixtures in your home may be made with lead, causing contamination.

If you live in NYC, you are eligible for the NYC free lead testing kit: email depleadunit@dep.nyc.gov, call 311 from within the city, or call 212-NEW-YORK from outside the five boroughs.

If you live outside NYC, you’re eligible for the NYS Department of Health free lead test kit: email FreeWaterTesting@health.ny.gov, call the State Health Department at (518) 402-7650, or fill out the form on the Free Lead Testing Pilot page of the Department of Health website.

Contact your local water supplier and ask if they offer free water testing, treatment, or lead service line replacement.

Home water testing kits are available at stores like Home Depot and Lowe’s. The Good Housekeeping Institute and University of Nebraska Water Quality Lab determined the PurTest Home Water Analysis Kit ($36.60, www.grainger.com) generally delivers accurate results.

Contact a water testing company or laboratory near you.

Contact your doctor for a lead blood test, especially for children.

Annual Water Quality Reports for each public water system provide some information on lead found in your area.

Visit the website ‘Know Your NY Water’ to find yours. If your report isn’t listed, contact your local health department or water authority.

Here’s how lead testing kits work: You send a sample of your water to a laboratory, and receive results within 30 days!
How do I reduce my exposure to lead in drinking water?

The most effective way to reduce lead in drinking water is to replace lead service lines, the greatest contributor to lead in drinking water. However, other water fixtures or solder in your home may be made of lead and put you at risk.

No level of lead exposure is safe.

Ways to reduce exposure:

- Contact your local government to see if they will replace your lead service line
- Use a water filter specifically designed to remove lead
- Use only COLD water for drinking and cooking
- Run your water for several minutes before use to flush your pipes
- Clean your faucet’s screen, or aerator, at least monthly to remove lead that builds up over time

Find out whether your city, town or village received grant funding to replace lead pipes at no cost to you: www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lslrp/awards.htm

Make sure your filter is certified with NSF/ANSI 53 or the Water Quality Association Gold Seal!

REMEMBER:
HOT water corrodes lead pipes more quickly. Boiling hot water does NOT eliminate lead!