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.

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Do I have a lead water service line in my home?

**Locate the water meter**
(it could be inside or outside your home)

Outdoor water meter (sidewalk, yard)
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**
1-inch in diameter with a shut-off valve

The pipe will likely be found in a basement, garage, or crawl space. Look at the portion of the pipe that enters your home through the floor or wall (the portion of the pipe below the shut-off valve).

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?

Yes
Your pipe is probably galvanized steel

No
You have a lead pipe

Silver or gray, difficult to scratch

Does a magnet stick to it?

Yes
You might have a lead pipe

No

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