

Fact Sheet: Lead & Drinking Water

In June of 1986, amendments to the SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT signed by President Reagan required the use of lead-free pipe, solder and flux in the installation or repair of plumbing systems connected to public water systems. The law gave states until 1988 to enforce the new limitations. Prior to that time, most solder contained about 50% lead.

According to the EPA, chances of having lead in your drinking water are likely to be high if:

- your home has faucets/fittings made of brass which contain some lead, or
- your home or water system has lead pipes, or
- your home has copper pipes with lead solder, AND ...
 - the home is less than 5 years old, or
 - you have naturally soft water, or
 - water often sits in the pipes for several hours.

To minimize lead in drinking water you should:

- Flush your pipes. Don't use water that has been sitting over six hours.
- Use only water thoroughly flushed from the cold water tap.
- Flush until the water becomes cold (this can take 2 minutes or longer).
- Fill containers from flushed tap and save in a refrigerator for later use.
- Use only cold water for drinking, and especially for making baby formula.
- Never cook with or consume water from the hot-water tap. (Hot water dissolves lead more easily and is therefore more likely to contain higher levels of lead.)
- Have your water tested by a competent lab approved by EPA or your state. (Your local department of health should be able to tell you which labs are qualified.)

NOTES:

Scientific data indicates that the NEWER the home, the GREATER THE RISK of lead contamination from plumbing.

Lead levels decrease as a building ages. As time passes, mineral deposits form a coating on the inside of the pipes (if the water isn't corrosive). This coating insulates water from the solder.

You can get more information from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791 and the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-FYI-LEAD.

If you are interested in evaluating potential lead hazards in your home, consider a personalized LeadProfile offered exclusively by HomeSafe Lead Testing. You'll find out where lead hazards might be and what you can do about them. Contact HomeSafe at 1-800-648-LEAD (or at WWW.LEADPRO.COM on the web) for details.