

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER**

The City of Vernon found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

### **Health Effects of Lead**

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

### **Sources of Lead**

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the workplace from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry.

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free", may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently establishes the definition for "lead-free" as the weighted average of 0.25% lead calculated across the wetted surfaces of a pipe, pipe fitting, plumbing fitting, and fixture and .02% lead for solder and flux. NSF International certifies plumbing products; consumers may wish to visit their website at [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) or call 800-NSF-MARK for information when choosing plumbing.

The City of Vernon does not have any lead in its source water or water mains in the street. When water is in contact for several hours with pipes (or service lines) or plumbing that contains lead, the lead may enter the drinking water. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New homes may also have lead; even "lead-free" plumbing may contain some lead.

EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Lead is not only found in drinking water; other sources of lead include paint, dust, and soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often, as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

## Steps to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water

- 1. Run your water to flush out lead.** If water hasn't been used in 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.
- 2. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
- 3. Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- 4. Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing a water filter or bottled water. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International 800-NSF-MARK or [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) for information on performance standards for water filters. To help maximize water quality, be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- 5. Test your water for lead.** If you think you may have elevated lead levels in your home drinking water, have it tested. Call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791 for more information. The City of Vernon provides testing, free of charge, to our customers. We submit our samples to The Water Spigot, a certified lab, who then tests our samples on our behalf. For more information regarding testing, please contact Jimmy Cook, Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator, at 850-855-1955.
- 6. Get your child's blood tested.** If you are concerned about exposure to lead, contact your local health department or health care provider to find out how you can get your child tested.
- 7. Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.** Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free", may contribute to lead in your drinking water. The law currently establishes the definition for "lead-free" as the weighted average of 0.25% lead calculated across the wetted surfaces of a pipe, pipe fitting, plumbing fitting, and fixture and 0.2% lead for solder and flux. Visit the NSF International website at [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

### What Happened? What is Being Done?

During our state-mandated monitoring, we tested a dozen samples for lead and copper in the City of Vernon's drinking water; results showed that 3 of these samples had higher lead content due to lead service lines.

The City of Vernon is educating our customers regarding the need to replace their old lead pipes.

**For More Information**

Call Jason Rhoton at 850-260-2277. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit the United States Environmental Protection Agency's website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) , visit the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's lead in drinking water website at <https://floridadep.gov/water/source-drinking-water/content/monitoring-lead-and-copper-florida-drinking-water> , or contact your health care provider.

**City of Vernon**  
**State Water System ID: 1670710**

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