



November 6, 2018

Hello!

As Fort Wayne City Utilities explains each year when we send out our annual water quality report – also known as the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) -- water leaving the Three Rivers Water Filtration Plant always meets or is better than state and federal standards require. The CCR lists all items that we test to ensure our residents get the best tasting, highest quality water we expect. However, lead pipes, lead solder and lead in plumbing fixtures inside homes, and lead in the water service line between the public water main and your home can cause lead levels in your drinking water to rise. Based on information collected by City Utilities homes built before 1937 are likely to have lead service lines. In homes built between 1951 and 1937 lead service lines are possible but not likely. Homes built after 1951 are not likely to have lead service lines. The chance of finding elevated lead levels in drinking water is greater in homes with lead water service lines.

As a follow up to National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 21 – 27), Fort Wayne City Utilities and the Allen County Department of Health want to remind you there many steps you can take to protect your family from risks associated with lead paint, lead-contaminated soil and dust, and lead in drinking water. Please be assured that if you follow the recommendations outlined below, you can reduce the likelihood that the water you drink will have an elevated level of lead, even if you have plumbing fixtures made of or containing lead.

To find out if household plumbing and water services lines may be causing higher lead levels in some homes, Fort Wayne regularly tests water from taps in homes that are likely to have lead plumbing or have a lead water service line and we will continue to do so on an annual basis. During the period from June 1 – September 30, 2018, City Utilities collected samples from 70 homes. The water samples from sixty-two (62) of those homes showed lead below the recommended level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), and 8 homes showed higher levels. City Utilities will continue regularly testing water in homes and buildings and will report the results to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the property owners.

### **Information from IDEM**

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

Fort Wayne City Utilities Three Rivers Water Filtration Plant found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes and buildings when water samples were collected and tested between June 1 and September 30, 2018. 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 a 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 can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect the child's brain development.

If you are concerned that a child in your home may have been exposed to lead, please contact the Allen County Department of Health at 260-449-7459 to find out how to have your child tested or call your doctor's office.

### **Sources of lead**

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formula and concentrated juices that are mixed with water. The EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead.

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect houses and buildings to water mains (service lines). In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2 percent lead and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes, and other plumbing materials to 8.0 percent.

When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon if the water has not been used all day, can contain fairly high levels of lead.

### **What are some other common sources of lead?**

1. **Lead-based paint** -- Houses and apartments built before 1978 may have paint that contains high levels of lead. Lead from paint, chips and dust can pose serious health risks if not taken care of properly. Landlords must inform new tenants about lead based paint before a lease takes effect and leases must include a disclosure about lead-based paint. Sellers must disclose known information on lead-based paint and hazards before selling a house. Lead-based paint is usually not a hazard if it is in good condition and it is not on a surface that regularly receives impact or friction such as a windowsill.
2. **The job** -- If you work with lead, you could bring it home on your hands or clothes. Shower and change clothes before coming home. Launder your work clothes separately from the rest of your family's clothes.
3. Old painted **toys and furniture.**
4. Food and liquids stored in **lead crystal or lead-glazed pottery or porcelain.**
5. **Lead smelters** or other industries that release lead into the air.
6. **Hobbies** that use lead, such as making pottery or stained glass, or refinishing furniture.
7. **Lead in soil** can be a hazard when children play in bare soil or when people bring soil into the house on their shoes. The only way to find out if soil lead hazards exist is to test for it.

### **Steps you can take in the home (or anywhere else) to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water**

Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer the water resides in the plumbing, the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 3 to 5 minutes. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of your

home's plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your health. It usually uses less than one or two gallons of water. To conserve water, fill a couple of bottles with water for drinking water after flushing the tap and whenever possible, use the first flush water to wash dishes or water the plants.

Try not to cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw it from the cold tap and then heat it. Boiling water does not remove lead content and can concentrate it. In addition, do not mix baby formula with water from the hot water tap.

The steps described above will reduce the lead concentration in your drinking water. However, if you are still concerned, you may wish to purchase bottled water for drinking and cooking or install a filtering device on your water faucets. Be sure to read the label carefully to be sure the filtering device removes lead.

For more information, call Fort Wayne City Utilities at 311 or 260-427-8311, or visit our website at [www.cityoffortwayne.org/utilities](http://www.cityoffortwayne.org/utilities).

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home or building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) or contact your health care provider who can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead. State and local government agencies that may be contacted include:

- Victoria Zehr, Water Quality Supervisor at the Three Rivers Water Filtration Plant, at 311 or 260-427-8311 can provide you with information about your facility's water supply.
- Indiana State Department of Health at 317-233-1250 or the Allen County Department of Health at 260-449-7459 can provide you with information about the health effects of lead.

Customers can get their water tested by contacting a laboratory certified to test for lead in drinking water. A list of other laboratories that are certified to test for lead in water may be found online at: [www.in.gov/isdh/22452.htm](http://www.in.gov/isdh/22452.htm) or [www.in.gov/isdh/files/CERTIFIED%20CHEMISTRY%20IN-STATE%20LABORATORIES.pdf](http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/CERTIFIED%20CHEMISTRY%20IN-STATE%20LABORATORIES.pdf). Two labs nearby are:

**Element Materials Technology Fort Wayne, LLC**  
328 Ley Road, Suite 100  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825  
Contact: Sarah Ezzelle  
Phone: 260-222-2134  
**element.com**

**Hoosier Microbiological Laboratory**  
912 West McGalliard  
Muncie, Indiana 47303-1702  
Contact: Ken Kaufman  
Phone: 765-288-1124  
**hml.com**

### **How does lead get into drinking water and what is being done to protect you?**

Treated drinking water leaving the Three Rivers Water Filtration Plant is tested weekly for lead. As described above, lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect houses and buildings to water mains (service lines). When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems (inside your house) containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon if the water has not been used all day, can contain fairly high levels of lead.

Fort Wayne employs pH and alkalinity adjustment to control corrosion. Over the years this treatment has proven to be effective. Currently the utility is in process of evaluating addition of orthophosphate to the water to improve corrosion control.

**Protecting your family from other lead hazards**

If you think your home may have high levels of lead:

- Get your children tested for lead, even if they seem healthy. Talk with your child’s doctor about having this simple blood test done or contact the Allen County Department of Health at 260-449-7459.
- Wash children’s hands, bottles, pacifiers and toys often.
- Make sure children eat healthy, low-fat foods.
- Get your home checked for lead hazards. Contact the Allen County Department of Health at 260-449-7459 for information about the Healthy Homes program.
- Regularly clean floors, window wells, window sills and other surfaces.
- Wipe off shoes – or take them off – before entering the house.
- Talk with your landlord about fixing surfaces with peeling or chipped paint.
- Take precautions to avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling or renovating (call 1-800-424-LEAD for guidelines).
- Don’t try to remove lead-based paint yourself.
- Flush your water taps if the water has been standing for a few hours. Let the taps run until the water turns noticeably colder before using the water for drinking or cooking.
- Only drink or cook with water from the cold water faucet. If you want hot water, draw cold water from the tap and heat it.
- Consider using bottled or filtered water to prepare infant formula or concentrated juices.
- Use a filtering pitcher or filtering device on your faucet.

Much more information about reducing lead risks may be found on the following websites:

- <https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead>
- <https://drinktap.org/Water-Info/Whats-in-My-Water/Lead-In-Water>
- <https://www.in.gov/isdh/26550.htm>
- <https://www.allencountyhealth.com/get-tested/lead/>

Fort Wayne City Utilities and the Allen County Department of Health are committed to protecting public health and safety and are ready to work with you to help you reduce the risk of exposure to lead.

Sincerely:



Kumar Menon, Director  
Fort Wayne City Utilities



Deborah McMahan, MD  
Allen County Health Commissioner



Mindy Waldron, Department Administrator  
Allen County Department of Health