

How can I tell if my water has too much lead?

You cannot see, smell or taste lead. However, you can have your household tested. SPRWS offers free water testing for lead to its retail customers. Call the lab at 651-266-1635 for more information.

You are more likely to have a higher level of lead in the drinking water if you have lead service lines coming into your home from the street. To determine if you have a lead service line, you can go to: <https://billpay.saintpaulwater.com> and click on "What's my service line made of?" or you can call our offices at 651-266-6270.

Will home water treatment devices help?

Some treatment devices that can reduce the amount of lead in drinking water include reverse osmosis and distillation units. However, these devices also soften water, so they should be installed at the faucet. They can be expensive and require regular maintenance to work well.

Point-of-use filters that have been certified for lead removal can be attached to the faucet used for drinking water.

Some filtered water pitchers can also remove lead. Check the product information to make sure it's been certified by NSF International for lead removal.

Go to nsf.org for more information. Use NSF/ANSI standard 53 for drinking water treatment systems, which can be found directly at tinyurl.com/j3y3bzx.

Use NSF/ANSI standard 58 for reverse osmosis drinking water treatment systems.

You can search for your product by brand name, product standard, and product type at info.nsf.org/Certified/DWTU.

For more information on these standards, go to www.nsf.org/info/leadfiltrationguide.

Contact NSF at info@nsf.org or 1.800.673.8010.

Saint Paul Regional Water Services is taking the lead in getting the lead out by:

- Testing our raw source water as well as treated water for lead content
- Treating the water in the system to reduce the amount of lead dissolved from plumbing
- Offering a lead assessment program to St. Paul property owners to make it easier financially to replace lead services on their property
- Replacing lead service lines in the water supply system

Other questions about lead?

You can find out more at: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/water-services/water-quality/lead-household-water>

SPRWS Customer Service

651.266.6350

The following agencies can also answer your questions about lead and related health issues:

Minnesota Department of Health

651.201.4700

EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline

1.800.426.4791

*Or you can find out more at
www.epa.gov/safewater
and
www.health.state.mn.us/lead*

Keeping Lead Out

Information about lead in water



All public water supply systems must test their water for lead. This testing is required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of the federal Safe Drinking Water program. Water tested in the Saint Paul water system meets all state and federal requirements for lead levels. Even so, water in certain homes may still contain undesirable amounts of lead.

How does lead get into household water?

Lead gets into water after it leaves the treatment plant. Most likely sources are lead pipes, lead solder and brass fixtures within homes. In older communities, lead service lines may connect homes to water mains under the street. When water stays in these service lines and home piping for extended periods of time, it can absorb small amounts of lead.



Where else does lead come from?

According to the EPA, only 20 percent of lead exposure comes from drinking water. The remaining 80 percent of exposure to lead comes from other sources. Lead is a common contaminant that can be found in lead-based paint, soil, household dust, pottery, pewter, and some types of food.

For more information on common sources of lead go to www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/lead/fs/common.html

Why is lead a problem?

If inhaled or swallowed, lead builds up in the body over time. Lead can be harmful. If too much is consumed, it can damage the brain, nervous system, red blood cells, and kidneys.

It can impact normal physical and mental development in babies and young children, cause deficits in attention span, hearing and learning disabilities of children, and increase blood pressure in adults.

Why are children and pregnant women at greater risk?

Amounts of lead that won't hurt an adult can be very harmful to a child. Smaller bodies absorb lead more rapidly. Drinking water is only one source of lead. Children are more likely to come in contact with other sources – like dust and dirt – when they play.

For infants whose diets consist mostly of liquids mixed with water, lead is a special problem. Mental and physical growth can be harmed permanently from ingesting too much lead for children. Thus, pregnant women should also be concerned about levels of lead.



If you have any questions, call SPRWS Customer service:

651.266.6350

What can I do to reduce lead in water?

Saint Paul Regional Water Services works around the clock to reduce exposure to lead in your drinking water, but here are some easy tips that can reduce that exposure even further for you and your family.

- Do not drink or cook with water that has collected in your plumbing for more than 6 hours (for example, overnight or during the work day).
- Clear your pipes – let cold water run from your faucet for 3-5 minutes to clear water.
- To reduce the amount of time you need to run the water, you can shower, flush the toilet, or run the dishwasher. However, you will still need to run water from any drinking water faucet for a short period .
- Do not use hot water directly from the faucet for cooking, drinking or making baby formula because lead dissolves more quickly in hot water.
- If you have a faucet used for drinking water that has an aerator, remove the aerator and clean it out once a month.
- Use a water pitcher with a filter certified for lead removal for your drinking water, or
- Use a point-of-use filter certified for lead removal at the faucet where you get your drinking water.

