

UNDERSTANDING LEAD

WHY LEAD?

Lead was once widely used in the water industry because it is a very malleable metal – it can be bent, twisted and turned without breaking. It was once a standard material in household plumbing, solder, faucets and fixtures and was also once used in service lines that connect to homes. Across the nation, water utilities are working to remove the lead lines from their systems.

HOW DOES LEAD ENTER WATER?

There is no detectable level of lead in the water in our reservoirs or the water leaving our plant. In addition, we have no lead in our 2,500 miles of water mains. But water can absorb lead when it comes in contact with materials containing lead, including lead-based solder, interior plumbing, faucets, and lead service lines – pipes that connect the water main in the street to individual homes or businesses. When these materials corrode, lead can enter the water. To prevent corrosion, SUEZ adds a treatment to the water that coats pipes and fixtures.

WHAT IS BEING DONE?

SUEZ is working to alleviate potential lead issues by:

- Optimizing our corrosion control treatment, which coats pipes to prevent lead and copper deposits from entering the water.
- Partnering with leading water quality experts to evaluate corrosion treatment and adjusting as necessary.
- Continuous testing. Water quality is so important to us that we perform nearly 50,000 tests each year at our lab in Haworth.
- An aggressive project to replace up to 2,400 lead services lines in 2019 – and to continue to replace lines until all the lead is removed from the system.



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STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

- 1.) Run the water to flush out any lead.** Let the water run from the faucet on cold for 15 to 30 seconds before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. Although showering or flushing the toilet flushes water through a portion of the plumbing system, you still need to run the water in a 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 gallon of water.
- 2.) Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not 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 the water from the cold tap and then heat it. 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.) Clean aerators.** Remove the screen from the tip of your faucet at least once a month and rinse off any residue and sediment.
- 5.) Properly maintain water softeners.** Not properly maintaining your water softener could have a negative impact on the corrosivity of the water in your home.
- 6.) Replace old fixtures.** Prior to 1986, faucets were allowed to have a small lead content, which can leach lead into the water. Faucets for laundry sinks and spigots are also likely to contain lead and should not be used for drinking or cooking.
- 7.) Test your water for lead.** If you are served by a utility-owned lead service line or gooseneck, you can request a free test of your drinking water by calling SUEZ at 1-800-422-5987. Other customers can contact an independent laboratory to have their water tested for lead. The NJDEP maintains a list of certified laboratories. To access this list, please visit <https://www13.state.nj.us/DataMiner>.
- 8.) Get your child tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get tested for lead if you are concerned about lead exposure. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead.
- 9.) Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** If there is lead in your home, you may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter if there is lead in your home. Be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 1-800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer.



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