



LEAD

What is lead?

Lead has the symbol "Pb" and is a natural metal found in soil, and rock. Lead has been used to make many products, and some of this lead can get into the air, the water, and even our bodies.

Small amounts of lead can get into drinking water from lead pipes, brass fittings and faucets, or lead solder. This is a greater problem in homes built before 1970 where lead pipes have been used. The amount of lead in the water goes up the longer the water sits in these pipes. Lead can also be found naturally in groundwater in some areas.

What are the effects of lead in drinking water?

The health effects of lead are linked to how much and how often you take lead into your body: a small amount can affect you after a long time; or, a large amount can affect you after a short time.

Young children and the unborn are most affected by lead intake. High lead intake at an early age can harm a child's learning ability and behaviour, as well as cause hearing and growth problems.

The effects of lead intake over many years can include increased blood pressure, fewer blood cells, kidney problems, and poor sperm production for men.

What is the guideline for lead?

The maximum acceptable concentration of lead in drinking water is 0.005 milligrams per litre (mg/L).

If you think that you or your child has health problems from high lead intake, see a health care provider. You or your child may need a blood test to find out how much lead is in your body.

 (709) 729-2563

 water@gov.nl.ca

 <https://www.gov.nl.ca/eccc/waterres/quality/drinkingwater/>





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Removing lead from drinking water

Replacing older pipes and plumbing fixtures is the most important step to help remove the source of lead from the home/system. However, lead can also occur naturally in groundwater. In this case, water treatment is required.

Some home water treatment units can remove lead from your drinking water, but they may be costly. If you decide to buy one, be sure that it is designed to remove lead and follow the instructions for changing the filters. See www.nsf.org for more information about home drinking water treatment units.

Reducing your exposure

To reduce or eliminate your intake of lead from drinking water you should:

- Use an alternate source of drinking water
- Run your tap for 2 or 3 minutes in the mornings, or after being away from home for over a day and for at least 30 seconds before each use.
- When preparing baby formula use commercially produced bottled water or sources known to be safe. Bottle re-filling stations may not meet acceptable water quality guidelines.

Where can I find out more?

To find out more, please visit Water Resources Management's website at www.gov.nl.ca/eccc/water.

You can also contact an Environmental Health Officer or Program Manager at the nearest Government Service Centre, NL Health Services, or a water resources official with WRMD.

