

Lead In Drinking Water



Important Information about Lead in Your Drinking Water

Recent drinking water quality monitoring conducted by Rend Lake Intercity Water System, State Water system ID# IL0555100, has found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some of the homes that are direct customers of the system. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

The Rend Lake Intercity Water System is concerned about the health of its customers because lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. During the most recent monitoring cycle, two sample points with known lead plumbing components were found to contain elevated levels of lead even though the source water from the lake did not contain any lead. These levels occurred in the first flush of water that was in contact with the home plumbing components and unused for an extended period of time between 2 and 4 days. Follow up sampling indicated that the levels dropped after the first flush of water and that concentration remained below the lead action level when the water from the faucets were routinely used.

All cities, water districts, and schools routinely monitor for lead. Although thousands of samples have been taken to monitor water quality in the past and will

continue to be taken in the future, public education and the removal of lead plumbing components in homes is always desirable. In response to the recent findings, the Rend Lake Intercity Water System is conducting public education about lead plumbing components in homes, health impacts associated with lead, and simple actions in your home that can minimize exposure from lead in plumbing components.

If you have any questions about how we are carrying out the requirements of the lead regulation please give us a call at **(618)439-4394**

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 work place and exposure 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 allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 0.25 percent lead to be labeled as "lead-free." The source of water from Rend Lake does not contain lead. The water main materials we use do not contain lead. All water districts use brass in pumps and other fittings. Brass may contain lead. When water is in contact with pipes [or service lines], and plumbing containing lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes or lead solder. 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. Don't forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead

dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

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

1. Run your water to flush out lead.

Run water for 15-30 seconds to flush lead from interior plumbing or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours.



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 bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 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's instructions to protect water quality.



5. Test your water for lead. Call us at (618)439-4394 to find out how to get your water tested for lead. While we do not test for lead ourselves, there are facilities that do in the area. Carbondale Central Lab is a State certified test facility for Lead. They can be reached at (618) 457-3240 ext. 223 or 224.



6. Get your child's blood tested. Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead, if you are concerned about exposure.

7. Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead. New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures,

such as faucets, with up to 0.25 percent lead to be labeled as "lead-free." Since older fixtures may contain higher levels of lead, the newer fixtures would be safer.

WHAT IS BEING DONE?

There are several actions that Rend Lake Intercity Water System is taking to address this lead in drinking water concern. These actions include conducting public education about lead plumbing components in homes, health impacts associated with lead, and simple actions in your home that can minimize exposure from lead in plumbing components. In addition to public education efforts, the Rend Lake Intercity Water System is increasing monitoring in homes known to contain lead plumbing components and is adjusting pH and hardness parameters when warranted by test results for further improvement of corrosion protection.

Each city and water district conducts their own water quality sampling and reporting. Proactive public education for all regional, State, and U.S. water users is important to all districts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call Rend Lake Intercity Water System at

618-439-4394

Or visit our Web site at

www.rendlake.org

To find out how to get your water tested for lead or for more information on steps Rend Lake Intercity Water System is taking to address the lead action level exceedance.

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at

www.epa.gov/lead

Or contact your health care provider.