LEAD REDUCTION PROGRAM

PROGRAMA DE REDUCCIÓN DE PLOMO

1983-87 HOMES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DENVER WATER

How does lead get into drinking water?

The water that Denver Water provides to homes and businesses is lead-free, but lead can get into the water as it moves through lead-containing household fixtures, plumbing and water service lines — the pipe that brings water into the home from the main in the street — that are owned by the customer.

While lead service lines haven't been used in Denver Water's service area since the 1950s, our analysis shows that some homes built between 1983 and 1987 have lead solder connecting sections of their interior plumbing. Having lead solder doesn't necessarily mean you have elevated levels of lead in your water. For decades, Denver Water has protected its customers from the effects of customer-owned lead-containing household plumbing in a variety of ways, including adjusting the pH of the water we deliver. A higher pH creates a protective coating inside water pipes, reducing the risk of lead from getting into drinking water.

Why is Denver Water focused on formula-fed infants and expecting families in homes built between 1983 and 1987?

While homes built between 1983 and 1987 are unlikely to have lead service lines (the primary source of lead in drinking water), Denver Water has found that some homes built between 1983 and 1987 have lead solder connecting sections of their interior plumbing, which can contribute to the presence of lead in drinking water. Additionally, fixtures and faucets installed prior to 2014 do not meet today's requirements for "lead-free" fixtures and can be a source of lead.

Having lead solder or pre-2014 fixtures and faucets doesn't necessarily mean you have elevated levels of lead in your water. But because of the large amount of water formula-fed infants ingest relative to their body size, they are particularly vulnerable to the risks of too much lead entering the body, which can cause serious health problems. This is why Denver Water has a program targeted to formula-fed infants and expecting families in homes built between 1983 and 1987.

Why is 3 ppb the cut-off to receive a filter?

As part of the process to develop and get approval for the Lead Reduction Program, Denver Water had to analyze alternative approaches to its proposal. Analysis of the primary alternative, adding a chemical called orthophosphate to the water, predicted lead levels to be at 3 ppb in homes built between 1983 and 1987.

While the pH adjustment Denver Water has implemented is providing protection for all customers, we are also providing filters to expecting families and those with formula-fed infants under the age of 24 months in 1983-1987 homes with lead levels over 3 ppb in order to provide equivalent treatment to orthophosphate. You can learn more about this analysis in the program proposal and see community feedback on the proposal at denverwater.org/Lead.

Why is 24 months the age cut-off to receive a filter?

Our program focuses on infants who are formula-fed and therefore have diets primarily consisting of tap water. By the age of 24 months, children are typically consuming a variety of foods and formula is no longer their main source of nutrition. You can follow the steps outlined below under "What other steps can I take to reduce the risk of lead exposure?" to reduce risk for all members of your household, including children over the age of 24 months.

Should I be concerned if I'm breastfeeding?

Adults typically consume less tap water and more food in relation to their body mass. As adults will use and store less nutrients due to their slowed rate of growth, breastfed infants have a much lower risk of being exposed to lead than a bottle fed infant whose main food is produced using tap water. If you are concerned about the potential risk of lead in your drinking water, follow the steps outlined below under "What other steps can I take to reduce the risk of lead exposure?".

Are older children and adults in my home at risk?

The Environmental Protection Agency's action level for lead in drinking water is 15 parts per billion (ppb). One ppb is equivalent to about one drop in an Olympic-sized swimming pool. It is important to note, however, that the action level is not a health indicator. Lead builds up in the body over time, so ongoing exposure, even at low levels, may eventually cause health effects. Infants and children are more vulnerable to lead than adults, whether from drinking water or other sources. Formula-fed infants are especially vulnerable to lead in drinking water because tap water is used to make up 90% of their diet.

We recommend following the steps outlined below under "What other steps can I take to reduce the risk of lead exposure?" to reduce risk for all members of your household and going to colorado.gov/pacific/

cdphe/categories/services-and-information/lead for more information on lead exposure. If you are concerned about the health of your children, please consult your pediatrician.

How long will I need to use the water pitcher and filter?

Please use the pitcher and filter and maintain it according to the manufacturer's instructions until formula-fed infants in your home are 24 months old.

When do I need to use the water pitcher?

Filtered water should be used for preparing infant formula. You should also use your filter for drinking (including making tea, coffee and lemonade) and cooking meals where water is a base ingredient or absorbed into the food (such as rice, beans and soup). It is fine to use non-filtered water for all other uses (such as showering, bathing, laundry, irrigation, dish washing, etc.).

Is my water safe to use for a shower or bath?

Yes. Bathing and showering are safe for your family. Human skin does not absorb lead in water at levels that cause a health concern.

Is my water safe for pets?

Changes in pet behavior as a result of drinking lead-contaminated water are not likely to be noticeable. In general, pets are more likely to obtain lead as a result of eating an object containing much higher lead levels (such as lead paint chips, improperly glazed ceramic food or water bowl).

What other steps can I take to reduce the risk of lead exposure?

In addition to using your pitcher and filter, Denver Water recommends that if water has not been used in the home for a few hours, such as first thing in the morning or after coming home from work, then run cold water from the kitchen or any bathroom faucet for five minutes (you can capture the water and reuse it for gardening, washing your car, etc.). You can also run the dishwasher, take a shower, or do a load of laundry to help flush out water in your internal plumbing before preparing infant formula, drinking or cooking.

Denver Water also recommends using only cold water for preparing

infant formula, drinking and cooking. Note that boiling water does not remove lead. You should also regularly clean your faucet's screen, also known as an aerator. You can find a video at **denverwater.org/Lead**.

Based on the age of your home, the source of lead in your drinking water is likely either lead solder in your internal plumbing (commonly used before 1987) and/or faucets that contain lead (fixtures and faucets installed prior to 2014 do not meet today's requirements for "lead-free" fixtures). Consider replacing these components in your home to permanently replace the source of lead.

Lead in drinking water is one of many possible sources of lead exposure. To better understand sources of lead in and around your home, please visit colorado.gov/cdphe/lead-what-are-common-sources.

What do I need to look for when buying new plumbing fixtures or faucets?

Replace pre-2014 faucets with new "lead-free" options. Fixtures installed before 2014 are likely to contain some brass, even if they have a chrome finish. View the Environmental Protection Agency's fact sheet on how to identify lead-free certification marks for drinking water system and plumbing products at nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P100LVYK.txt.

When will I receive replacement filters for the water pitcher?

Your pitcher needs a replacement filter about every six months to maintain effectiveness. We will mail you free replacement filters to use while your child is less than 24 months old.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions, please contact **Denver Water Customer Care at 303-893-2444** from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, email us at **lead@denverwater.org or visit denverwater.org/Lead.**