



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH &  
SENIOR SERVICES**

# Lead in Private Drinking Water Wells in Jefferson County, Missouri

## WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Private drinking water wells in Jefferson County have been found with elevated levels of lead due to historic mining activities in the area.

\*An estimated 20% of the population in Jefferson County get their water from a private well rather than a public water system.

\*Nearly 1,800 private wells have been tested so far, but many residents with private wells have not yet had their well tested.

\*Of those tested, approximately 1 out of 12 wells have elevated levels of lead.

## WHY THE CONCERN?

Exposure is a significant health concern, particularly for children, who are most sensitive to the adverse effects of lead.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Get your private well tested and have an appropriate filtration system installed if results show elevated concentrations of lead.

\*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides private well water testing and a filtration system free of charge to qualifying residents in Jefferson County to reduce lead in their drinking water.

# Lead *Heavy Metal* with Heavier Consequences

*There is no safe level of lead in the bloodstream; any amount of lead is toxic. Some symptoms are not obvious, which is why testing for lead levels in the blood is so important.*

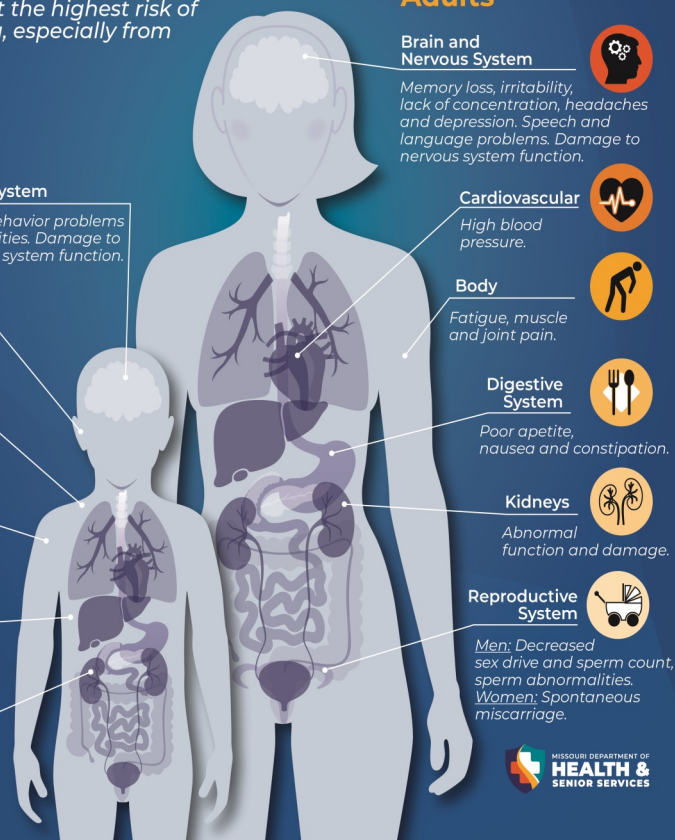
*Children are at the highest risk of lead poisoning, especially from ages 0-6.*

### Children

- Brain and Nervous System**  
Lower IQ, behavior problems and learning disabilities. Damage to nervous system function.
- Hearing**  
Hearing loss.
- Body**  
Bone and muscle deterioration.
- Growth**  
Slowed growth.
- Blood**  
Anemia.
- Kidneys**  
Abnormal function and damage.

### Adults

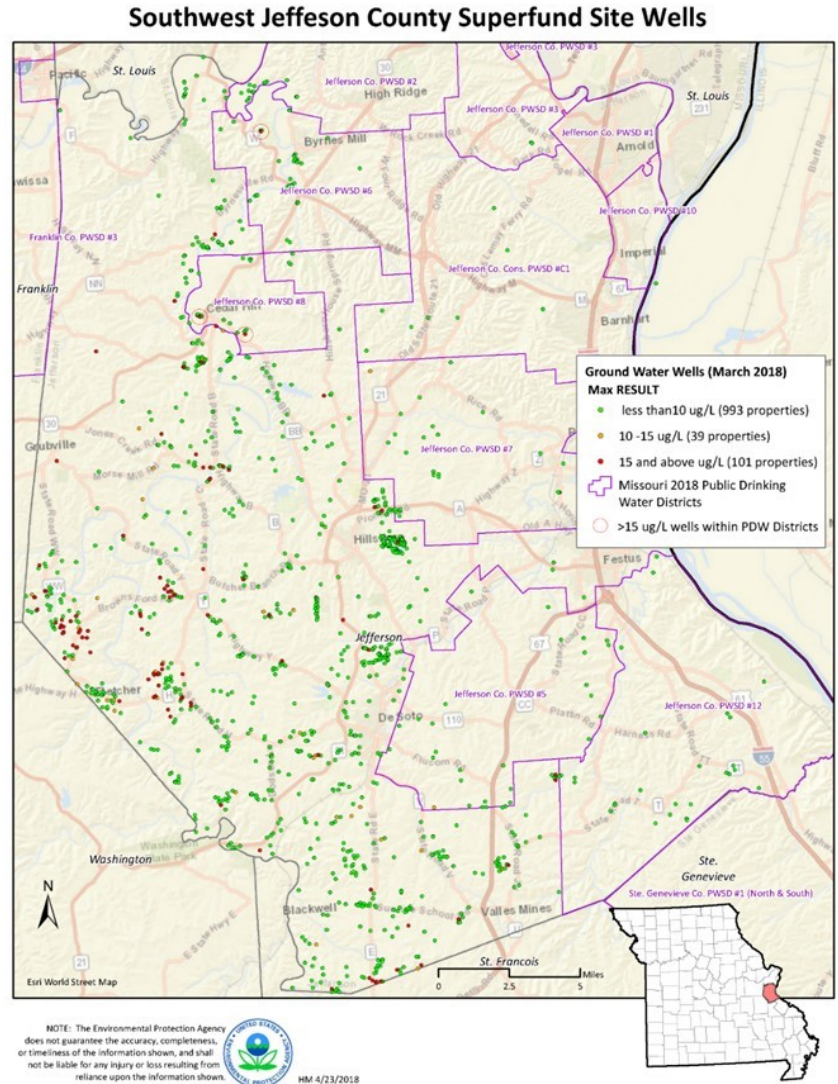
- Brain and Nervous System**  
Memory loss, irritability, lack of concentration, headaches and depression. Speech and language problems. Damage to nervous system function.
- Cardiovascular**  
High blood pressure.
- Body**  
Fatigue, muscle and joint pain.
- Digestive System**  
Poor appetite, nausea and constipation.
- Kidneys**  
Abnormal function and damage.
- Reproductive System**  
Men: Decreased sex drive and sperm count, sperm abnormalities.  
Women: Spontaneous miscarriage.



# Southwest Jefferson County Mining Site

Jefferson County is part of Missouri's Old Lead Belt. Historical mining activities and the use of mine waste as topsoil and fill material in residential yards, along roads, and along rail lines have contributed to elevated levels of lead and other heavy metals in soil, groundwater, surface water and sediment in the area.

The Southwest Jefferson County Mining (SJCM) Site is on EPA's National Priorities List (NPL). The site is in Southeastern Missouri and includes all of Jefferson County, with the exception of the Herculaneum Lead Smelter Site.



## Contact Information:

**EPA — Steve Sturgess, (913) 551-7913**  
**Jefferson County Health Department — (636) 797-3737**

## For more information on the SJCM Site:

**EPA Factsheet—[www.epa.gov/mo/southwest-jefferson-county-mining-national-priorities-list-npl-superfund-site-jefferson-county-4](http://www.epa.gov/mo/southwest-jefferson-county-mining-national-priorities-list-npl-superfund-site-jefferson-county-4)**

## Actions You Can Take:

- ☑ Get your private well tested.
- ☑ If lead elevations are found, get an EPA-provided water filter! This is a small filter connected to your water line and fits under your sink.
- ☑ Get your child tested for lead exposure! Lead testing is available for children under the age of 6 at Jefferson County Health Department or your doctor's office.