

Lead in Your Drinking Water

No one should risk having lead contaminate their drinking water. Lead may be in groundwater in certain areas of Missouri due to naturally-occurring lead deposits and historical lead mining activities. Lead can also enter drinking water through lead pipe and fixture breakdown.

Any home could have lead in household plumbing or the water delivery system, regardless of your water source being public or private. This means it is important for everyone to test their water.

See full health facts on the back page

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services recommends testing your water for lead. DHSS also recommends installing a water treatment system if testing shows elevated levels. It is important to make sure the system is installed and operated according to the manufacturer's instructions. After installing a filter, test your water again to see if the filter is working properly and reducing lead.

Options to make water safe for you and your family:

- **Buy a water filter:** Filters certified for lead reduction are marked "NSF 53" on the outside of the package. These filters have been rated and approved by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF). Countertop filters and faucet-mount filters can be purchased from local stores. For example, a Brita filtered water dispenser costs less than \$40. A year's supply of replacement filters costs less than \$40.
- **Install a reverse-osmosis (R/O) system:** R/O systems are very effective at reducing lead from water. R/O systems that are certified for lead reduction are marked "NSF 58."

In addition to filtering or treating your water, follow these tips:

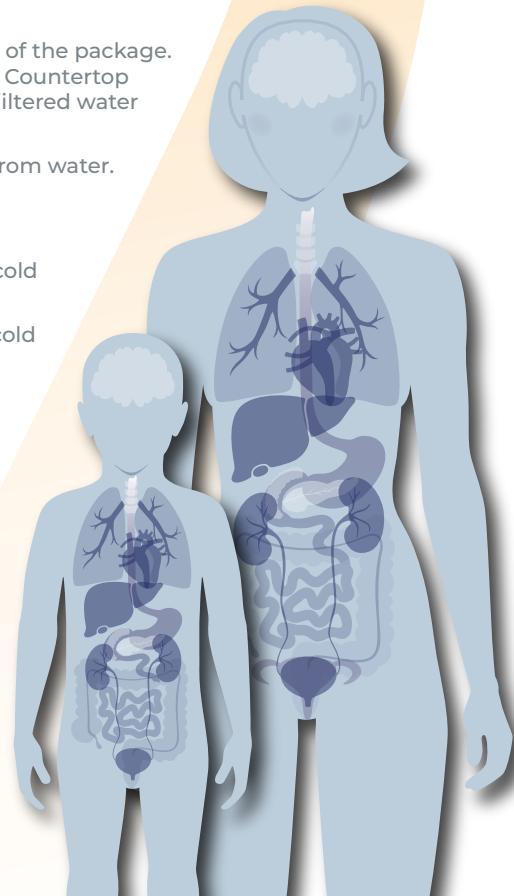
- **Use cold water:** Never cook or mix baby formula using hot water from the tap. Use only cold water for drinking, cooking and preparing baby formula.
- **Run the tap:** Make it a practice to run the water at each tap before use until it becomes cold and reaches a steady temperature, especially if the water has not been used for several hours. This is very important if you use a water softener!
- **Clean your screen:** Regularly cleaning your faucet's screen, also called the aerator, will reduce sediment, debris and lead particles that can collect and get into your water.

Remember that boiling water will not remove lead.

If you have questions about testing your private well water for lead, contact your local public health agency or DHSS. For those on public water, contact your public water system about testing.

Local public health agencies may also be able to offer blood-lead testing for your children.

Find your local public health agency at
Health.Mo.Gov/lpha



Health.Mo.Gov/private-drinking-water

Private Drinking Water Program
573-751-6102

Lead

Heavy Metal with Heavier Consequences

There is no safe level of lead in the blood. 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 those under the age of 6.

Lead Exposure can cause life-long issues in **Children** and **Adults**

Children



Brain and Nerves

Lower IQ, behavior problems and learning disabilities, and damage to nervous system.



Hearing

Hearing loss.



Body

Bone and muscle break down.



Growth

Slowed growth.



Blood

Low red blood cells.



Kidneys

Abnormal function and damage.

Adults

Brain and Nerves

Memory loss, mood swings, trouble focusing, headaches and sadness. Speech trouble and damage to nervous system.



Heart

High blood pressure.



Body

Tiredness, muscle and joint pain.



Digestion

Poor appetite, nausea and constipation.



Kidneys

Abnormal function and damage.



Reproductive System

Men: Low sex drive and sperm count, and sperm abnormalities.

Women: Miscarriage.



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH &
SENIOR SERVICES**