Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES
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Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

Safe and healthy school environments can foster healthy and successful children. To protect public health, the Public Health Law and New York State Health Department (NYS DOH) regulations require that all public schools and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) test lead levels in water from every outlet that is being used, or could potentially be used, for drinking or cooking. If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 5 parts per billion (ppb), which is equal to 5 micrograms per liter (µg/L), the NYS DOH requires that school buildings take action to reduce the exposure to lead. Please keep in mind that other regulatory agencies have determined that levels of lead in drinking water that are below 15 ppb or 15 ug/L are acceptable. The NYS DOH has required stricter thresholds for K-12 school buildings.

What is "first draw" testing of school drinking water for lead?

The "on-again, off-again" nature of water use at most schools can raise lead levels in school drinking water. Water that remains in pipes overnight, over a weekend or over vacation periods stays in contact with lead pipes or lead solder and, as a result, could contain higher levels of lead. This is why schools are required to collect a sample after the water has been sitting in the plumbing system for a certain period of time. This "first draw" sample is likely to show higher levels of lead for that outlet than what you would see if you sampled after using the water continuously. However, even if the first draw sample does not reflect what you would see with continuous usage, it is still important because it can identify outlets that have elevated lead levels.

What are the results of the first draw testing?

Sampling was completed for the following buildings on April 17, 2024.

- OHM BOCES Main Building
- Lincoln Ave Building
- MVCC Building
- Support Services Building
- Brodock Press Building

Surveys were completed to determine where drinking sources are in the building, and from that survey, sample locations were determined. These sample locations were tested and analyzed by a lab to

determine the lead in drinking water level. From that survey and the analysis of the sample, the following locations were determined to have an elevated level. The locations that had an elevated level are provided below:

OHM BOCES

Main Building

Samples Collected on 4/17/24

Floor	Function/ Space ID	Room	Water Outlet	Sample Results (ug/L)	Response Action
01	OHM 14	111	Sink	7.0	Posted sign Handwashing Only

Lincoln Ave Building

Samples Collected on 4/17/24

Floor	Function/ Space ID	Room	Water Outlet	Sample Results (ug/L)	Response Action
01	LIN - 2	Nurse's Room	Sink	33.0	Posted sign Handwashing Only
02	LIN - 4	Hallway near room 301	Fountain	5.1	Taken out of service and provided alternative water source
02	LIN - 6	Hallway near room 315	Fountain	10.0	Taken out of service and provided alternative water source
01	LIN - 8	Cafeteria	Sink	18.1	Posted sign Handwashing Only
01	LIN - 9	Cafeteria	Sink	21.6	Posted sign Handwashing Only

What is being done in response to the results?

Once the results were received from the lab, the results were reviewed. Water outlets that tested with lead levels above the action level (5 ppb or ug/L) were removed from service. Efforts were made to provide an alternate water supply where applicable, unless the water outlet is needed for handwashing. In that case, a sign was posted at the water outlet and training regarding only using that water source for handwashing purposes was provided. Water outlets that tested below the action level remain in service with no restrictions.

What are the health effects of lead?

Lead is a metal that can harm children and adults when it gets into their bodies. Lead is a known neurotoxin, particularly harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of children under six years old. Lead can harm a young child's growth, behavior and ability to learn. Lead exposure during pregnancy may contribute to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. There are many sources of lead exposure in the environment, and it is important to reduce all lead exposure as much as possible. Water testing helps identify and correct possible sources of lead that contribute to exposure from drinking water.

What are the other sources of lead exposure?

Lead is a metal that has been used for centuries for many purposes, resulting in widespread distribution in the environment. Major sources of lead exposure include lead-based paint in older housing and lead that built up over decades in soil and dust due to historical use of lead in gasoline, paint and manufacturing. Lead can also be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, foods, plumbing materials and cosmetics. Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies, but drinking water could become a possible source of lead exposure if the building's plumbing contains lead. The primary source of lead exposure for most children with elevated blood-lead levels is lead-based paint.

Should your child be tested for lead?

The risk to an individual child from past exposure to elevated lead in drinking water depends on many factors, including but not limited to, a child's age, weight, amount of water consumed and the amount of lead in the water. Children may also be exposed to other significant sources of lead including paint, soil and dust. Since blood lead testing is the only way to determine a child's blood lead level, parents should discuss their child's health history with their child's physician to determine if blood lead testing is appropriate. Pregnant women or women of childbearing age should also consider discussing this matter with their physician.

Additional Resources

- For more information regarding the testing program or sampling results, contact Mike Colangelo, OHM BOCES Director of Facilities, or visit https://www.oneida-boces.org/Page/3363

- For information about lead in school drinking water: https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htmhttp://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/LeadTestinginSchoolDrinkingWater.html
- For information about NYSDOH Lead Poisoning Prevention Program: http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/
- For more information on blood lead testing and ways to reduce your child's risk of exposure to lead, see "What Your Child's Blood Lead Test Means": http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2526/
- For Lead Poisoning Prevention Publications: https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/education_materials/index.htm

Sincerely,

Patricia N. Kilburn, Ed.D.
District Superintendent