A Notice to Parents, Guardians, Faculty and Staff of
District Office
Lead Testing of School Drinking Water
August 29, 2024

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 (N Y S D O H) 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 N Y S D O H requires that the school take action to reduce the exposure to lead. The level for past testing was previously set at 15 parts per billion (ppb).

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?

The results of the first draw testing of every outlet that could be used, or could potentially be used, for drinking or cooking are posted on the district's website (link under Additional Resources section of this document).

The outlets that tested at levels above 5 parts per billion (ppb) are below.

Building: District Office
Sample Number: 104.8-1
Location: Basement Men's Lavatory
Fixture/Outlet Type: Sink
Laboratory Analysis (in ppb): 7.2

Building: District Office
Sample Number: 104.8-3
Location: Basement Kitchen
Fixture/Outlet Type: Sink
Laboratory Analysis (in ppb): 7.9

Building: District Office
Sample Number: 104.8-5
Location: Superintendent's Office Lavatory
Fixture/Outlet Type: Sink
Laboratory Analysis (in ppb): 6.2

What is being done in response to the results?

Outlets that tested with lead levels above the action level (5 ppb) were removed from service unless an outlet is a sink faucet needed for handwashing. In that case, a sign was posted at the outlet indicating that the sink is not to be used for drinking. Many of these outlets were already out of service or marked for handwashing only based on previous testing. Outlets that tested below the action level remain in service with no restrictions.

Certain outlets may receive remediation measures (filters, replacement of nozzles and/or hardware, replacement of fountain equipment) and will be tested prior to being put back into service.

A remediation plan is posted on the district's website (link under Additional Resources section of this document) and will be updated frequently. Any future testing reports will also be posted to the website.

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 6 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 and sampling results, go to our school website:
https://www.lancasterschools.org/departments/facilities/2024-water-testing

For information about lead in school drinking water, go to:
https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htm

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/LeadTestinginSchoolDrinkingWater.html

https://www3.erie.gov/envhealth/sites/www3.erie.gov.envhealth/files/2022-10/leadwaterfactsheet.pdf

For information about N Y S D O H Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, go to: 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/ (English)

https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/education_materials/index.htm (available in ten languages).