

The Facts:

Lead poisoning is a serious disease, especially for young children. Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, mental retardation, and growth problems. Infants and children under the age of six are most at risk.

No treatment completely removes lead from the body. The best treatment is preventing more lead from entering the body.

Usually the lead enters children when they put their fingers or toys in their mouths. The lead dust on their fingers or toys is then swallowed. This lead dust can be anywhere in the home or outside. It is especially high in soil, on floors, and in window wells. Lead usually comes from old lead paint, but lead can also come from many other sources like water.

Lead in Water

In Philadelphia, there is no lead in water when it leaves the water treatment plant. Lead can enter the water from plumbing systems – pipes, solder, and fixtures (faucets). The Water Department has replaced most of the lead service pipes. The lead is usually found in the solder used to connect copper pipes inside the property, and as an impurity in brass faucets made before 1999.

The Good News: *Lead Poisoning is Preventable!*

Philadelphia water tends to be cold, not acidic, and high in dissolved minerals. All of these help prevent the lead from being dissolved. In fact, the minerals in the water cover the inside of the pipes with a coating that keeps the lead out of the water.

Also, lead levels in water are usually high only in the morning

To Keep Your Water Safe....

1. Flushing - Allow the water to run in the morning, the first time you open the faucet. Run the water until you feel it getting cold – usually 1 or 2 minutes.
2. Use only cold water for cooking or drinking
3. After flushing, save the water in a bottle for use later
4. Use water filter systems that remove lead
5. Replace the water pipes, solder, and faucets with materials that do not contain lead
6. Use bottled water for cooking or drinking

Other Ways to Prevent Lead Poisoning

WASH IT OUT!!

- * Wash your children's hands often (before eating, sleeping, and after playing)
- * Wash their toys
- * Wash the floors they play on
- * Wash your windowsills and wells
 - Use any household detergent, like dishwasher soap (2 tablespoons in a bucket of wash water)
 - Scrub hard !

EAT IT OUT!!

- * Serve a balanced diet with foods high in calcium (milk and dairy foods) and iron (beef, leafy green vegetables, eggs)
- * Cut down on fatty and fried foods
- * Don't store food in ceramic bowls or metal cans

KEEP IT OUT!!

- * Don't let children play in the dirt
- * Hire certified workers for any job that disturbs the paint
- * Never burn or dry-scrape lead paint
- * Keep children away from items that contain lead – like fishing weights and keys

The School District of Philadelphia is dedicated to improving the learning environment for students. The District has begun an extensive testing program in the schools to find water systems that may contain dangerous levels of lead.

To protect the students and staff, the following precautions are being implemented:

1. Every school's water system is being flushed every morning before the students and faculty arrive
2. Each school's water system is being inspected and tested by certified laboratories
3. Water pipes, components, and faucets will be changed with non-lead units
4. Information about lead in water, and preventing lead poisoning, is being distributed to faculty, staff, parents, and students

By following the steps in this pamphlet, you can help reduce your family's exposure to lead.



For More Information:

School District of Philadelphia
215-875-3900

**Philadelphia Health Department
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention
Program:
215-685-2797**

Pennsylvania Department of Health
Lead Information Line:
#1-717-782-2884

Environmental Protection Agency
Regional Office:
215-597-9800

Consumer Product Safety Commission:
1-212-466-1612

National Lead Information Center:
1-800-LEAD-FYI



**Keep Your Family
Safe From Lead in
Water**



**A Message from the
School District of Philadelphia,
and the Philadelphia Department
of Public Health**