



Tioga County Public Health Department

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Press Release

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March is poisoning prevention month and we would like to provide you with information on lead in water and lead poisoning.

A few facts about lead:

- Lead can be found in lead-based paint, air, soil, household dust, food, certain types of pottery, porcelain and pewter as well as jewelry, toys and folk medicines. Most lead exposures occur from lead based paint.
- Lead seldom occurs naturally in the source for water supplies like rivers, lakes and ground water.
- Lead enters drinking water as a result of corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and plumbing.
- Lead is not absorbed through the skin during activities like hand washing, bathing or showering.
- Low levels of lead in drinking water are common. United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and NYS Department of Health set safe drinking water standards.

What are the health effects of lead?

The health effects of lead depend on the total exposure to lead sources over time and an individual's health status. Elevated blood lead levels in children can result in behavior and learning problems, lower IQ, hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems and anemia.

What about lead testing for my child?

All children should be tested for lead at age one and two. If you have concerns about lead exposure in your older children, consult your child's primary care provider. A "fingerstick" blood test can be done at most primary care provider offices. The test results are known within several minutes. Other primary care providers may refer you to a testing lab. The Health Department can help you find a primary care provider as well as assist with obtaining blood lead testing for your child. Call the Health Department at (607) 687-8600.

How do I learn about the quality of the water supplied to my house?

Public water systems are required to provide their users with Annual Water Quality Report (AWQR). If your water is supplied by a municipal supplier, contact them for this report. Lead and copper results for the most recent sampling can be found in this report. Community suppliers (not connected to municipal water systems) — those that supply water to at least 25 people in residences such as apartment buildings in rural areas — are also required to provide their users with an AWQR.

If the cause of elevated lead levels is often fixtures, how do I have the water tested at my house?

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, even including some advertised as "lead-free", may contribute lead to drinking water. Prior to 2014 the law allowed end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8% lead to be labeled as "lead free," after 2014 this limit was lowered to 0.25% Visit the National Sanitation Foundation Web site at www.nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

How can I reduce my exposure to lead that may be in the drinking water if I choose not to have the water tested in my home?

Run water for 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours. This reduces the concentration of lead-containing water from the pipes. Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula. Boiling water will not reduce lead concentration.

If you choose to test the water at your home, contact one of the laboratories on the list posted on our website. They will provide information, sampling instructions and containers for proper testing. You may also call the Tioga County Public Health Department for more information on testing at (607) 687-8600. **For additional lead information, you can access the websites below or call the Tioga County Public Health Department at 687-8600.**

www.epa.gov

<http://tiogacountyny.com/departments/public-health>