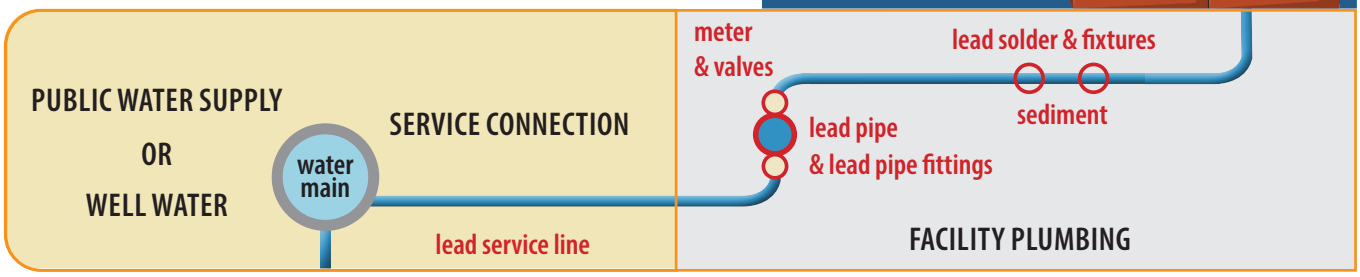
CHILD CARE
DRINKING WATER SAFETY

TEST YOUR WATER FOR LEAD!

Public water systems must meet water quality standards. However, once water leaves the water main, any lead-containing plumbing parts can pose a health risk. The items in **red** can be a source of lead in your child care facility's plumbing.



WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Young children are especially vulnerable to lead's toxic effects. Even at low levels, lead can damage the brain and nervous system, contribute to learning and behavior problems, impair a child's development and lower their IQ.

Children spend a lot of time at child care facilities and drink tap water or eat food prepared with water from faucets in these homes or buildings. In fact, formula-fed infants consume more water per body weight than anyone else!

> *"Participating child care centers and family or group day care homes shall make available to children, as nutritionally appropriate, potable water as an acceptable fluid for consumption throughout the day, including at meal times."*
>
> **— Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010**

NATIONAL Drinking Water ALLIANCE

www.DrinkingWaterAlliance.org

Reduce Lead in Child Care Drinking Water

IMPLEMENT ROUTINE BEST PRACTICES

- Only use water from the cold tap for drinking and cooking
- Allow water to run after periods of non-use, like each morning, after weekends and holidays
  - 5-30 seconds is usually enough
  - If you believe you have a lead service line (if building constructed before 1950) you must flush for 3 minutes or until the water gets colder
- Regularly clean aerators on faucets in a vinegar solution to remove all accumulated grit
- Avoid using outdoor spigots, hose bibs or laundry sinks for drinking water

TEST YOUR WATER FOR LEAD

- Even when your utility provides safe water, water should be tested at the tap for lead that can come from facility plumbing.
- Learn what your state requires and provides. Some states have free testing programs for child care drinking water or have grants available to assist with remediation if needed.
- Have a certified water analysis lab test your tap water.
- It is critical that tap water samples are drawn correctly. Train staff or have a utility/lab technician draw the samples. Your state may have particular requirements.
- The lab report will tell you the lead level in your sample(s) and whether it is above the Action Level (AL). If any taps at your site test over the AL for lead, immediately discontinue use of that tap and provide an alternative source of water. If any taps are close to the AL for lead, talk to your local health department about next steps.

DEVELOP A PLAN TO TAKE CARE OF ELEVATED LEAD

- Statistics show you most likely won't have a problem. Still, you need to be prepared in case you do!
- Consult with your water utility and/or local health department about appropriate action.
- Review resources below for additional details.

COMMUNICATE RESULTS

- Whether the results are good or bad, share them with all child care staff, parents, and the local and state health department.
  - Bad results? Let people know what you'll do about it.
  - Good results? Spread the good news and show families you take their children's health seriously—then promote *Water: First for Thirst!*
- If you have fixed contamination problems, consider posting a child friendly symbol of safe drinking water at each safe tested tap.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- *"3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities"* bit.ly/2g32iA4
- *"Managing Lead in Drinking Water at Schools and Early Childhood Education Facilities"* bit.ly/2wvUo9n
- *"Make Every Sip Count! 30 Day Water Challenge"* drinkingwateralliance.org/ecewaterchallenge
- *More National Drinking Water Alliance Resources* drinkingwateralliance.org/safety-earlycare

Learn how to remain in compliance with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 at www.bit.ly/2010-compliance

NATIONAL Drinking Water ALLIANCE

Content developed by the Nutrition Policy Institute, University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors. Icons by Pixel Buddha, Daniel Bruce and Freepik from www.flaticon.com.