

# Lead Risk Mitigation

There are several easy things you can do to reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water. These actions are particularly important for those who are pregnant, breastfeeding or have children under the age of 6 living in your home.

- 1. Flush your plumbing. Before using tap water for drinking or cooking, flush your plumbing by running the kitchen faucet (or any other tap you take drinking or cooking water from) on cold for a minimum of 3 minutes, and longer if necessary, until the water stream is noticeably colder. This is especially important if your water has been sitting in your pipes for more than six hours.**

Showering, doing laundry and flushing the toilet all help clear water from the pipes. Bathing, showering and doing laundry in water from lead service lines or lead plumbing is safe. To conserve water, you can also reserve the flushed water and use it for watering household plants or outdoor plants.

You may also want to consider filling a clean container(s) with water from the flushed tap, and reserving this water for drinking, cooking, or other consumption.

2. Use only cold water for cooking and drinking. Water from the hot water tap can dissolve lead more easily than cold water. Boiling water will not reduce the amount of lead in your drinking or cooking water. In fact, boiling can concentrate the lead in water. You can also consider if desired, purchasing bottled water from a known lead-free source for drinking and cooking.
3. Inspect your aerator. The aerator on the end of your faucet is a screen that can catch debris, including particles of lead. It is recommended to periodically remove the aerator and rinse out any debris.
4. Purchase a home filtration system. Home drinking water filtration systems or water filtering pitchers can reduce or eliminate lead. Be sure to look for products certified by NSF/ANSI under Standard 53 for removal of lead and follow any manufacturer's guidelines on installation and maintenance of the product. Find a list of products at [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) or on the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services [Website](#).
5. Replace your Home lead service line or interior plumbing. Lead pipe is shiny when scraped with a screwdriver, and a magnet will not stick to it. (Galvanized steel pipe is dull when scraped and a magnet will stick to it.) Replacement must be done by a licensed plumber under contract from the homeowner.

In addition, the CDC recommends that all children under the age of 6 be tested at least once for lead poisoning. Pregnant or breastfeeding women at risk for lead poisoning should also be tested for lead in their blood. Lead has no beneficial role in the body and there is no minimum lead level that does not cause effects. Most lead poisoned people do not look or act sick. Children up to age 6 should have a blood lead test if there is no record of a previous test. Risks for lead poisoning include living in or frequent visits to a house built prior to 1978 or having a sibling or playmate diagnosed with lead poisoning. Pregnant or breastfeeding women who were exposed to lead at an early age or are at risk of lead exposure due to their environment, occupation, or hobbies should also get tested. Testing is available at your doctor's office.