

## To reduce your exposure to lead from plumbing...

Rockwood Water PUD encourages you to follow these easy steps:

### 1. Run your water to flush out lead.

Before using water for drinking or cooking, run the water for 30 seconds to 2 minutes or until it becomes colder from each tap when it has not been used for several hours. This flushes water that may contain lead from the pipes.



### 2. Use cold, fresh water

**for cooking and preparing baby formula.** 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.

**3. Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.

**4. Consider using a filter.** Check whether it reduces lead – not all filters do. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality. Contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) for information on performance standards for water filters.

**5. Test your water for lead.** Call the LeadLine at 503-988-4000 to find out how to get a FREE lead-in-water test.

**6. Test your child for lead.** Ask your physician or call the LeadLine to find out how to have your child tested for lead. A blood lead level test is the only way to know if your child is being exposed to lead.

**7. Consider buying low-lead fixtures.** New brass faucets, fittings, and valves may contribute to lead in your drinking water. Federal law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, to contain up to 8% lead. These fixtures are labeled as "lead free." When buying new fixtures, seek out those with the lowest lead content. Visit [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) to learn more about lead content in plumbing fixtures.

## Testing Your Water for Lead

Multnomah County provides free lead-in-water test kits and has information regarding other lead hazards. Call the Multnomah County Health Department LeadLine at 503-988-4000, visit their Web site at [www.leadline.org](http://www.leadline.org).

- Free lead-in-water testing
- Free childhood blood lead level testing
- Lead poisoning prevention workshops
- Programs to reduce hazards in eligible homes
- General information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead

The following is a list of some state-approved laboratories in the Metropolitan area that you can call to have your water tested for lead. These labs charge a fee.

- |                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| • Alexin Analytical Laboratories | 503-639-9311 |
| • Pyxis Laboratories             | 503-254-1794 |
| • Test America Portland          | 503-906-9200 |

### For Additional Information

Visit the *Environmental Protection Agency's* Web site at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead).



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# Lead

in Drinking Water  
&  
Household Plumbing



Para obtener un copia de esta información en Español, llame al: 503-988-4000.

# About Lead in Your Drinking Water

*Rockwood Water People's Utility District found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.*

## **Health Effects of Lead**

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life.



During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

## **Sources of Lead**

Lead is a common metal found throughout the environment. Common sources of lead exposure are from lead-based paint, household dust, soil and water. Lead is also found in other household objects such as toys, make-up and pottery.

Lead is rarely found in our source waters. Rockwood Water PUD does not use lead in service lines. Today, the main sources of lead in water in the Metropolitan area are from lead solder used to join copper pipes, and brass plumbing fixtures and components, including those advertised as "lead-free." In homes built or plumbed with copper pipes before 1985, lead solder may have been used to join the pipes. When water stands in plumbing systems that contain lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. Water that has been sitting in household pipes for several hours, such as in the morning, or after returning from work or school, is most likely to contain lead. If present, lead in drinking water may contribute 10 to 20 percent of a person's exposure to lead. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

In the Metropolitan area, dust from paint in homes built before 1978 is likely the most common source of exposure to lead. Other sources include drinking water, soil, pottery, traditional folk medicines or cosmetics, toys and some occupations and hobbies. For information about these and other lead hazards, contact the Multnomah County Health Department *LeadLine* at 503-988-4000 or at [www.leadline.org](http://www.leadline.org).



Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, and brass and chrome plated brass faucets. The Portland Water Bureau's corrosion treatment reduces corrosion in plumbing by increasing the pH of water from the Bull Run system. Our groundwater supply does not require this treatment. Comparison of monitoring results with and without pH adjustment shows over 50 percent reduction in lead at the tap. In addition to reducing lead exposure in drinking water, we support programs to reduce exposure to lead from all sources, especially lead paint. To learn how you can access these programs and ways to reduce your exposure to all sources of lead, contact the *LeadLine*, **503-988-4000**.