

Lead in Drinking Water

BCWS' monitoring results show that the water we deliver is in compliance with EPA regulations and that the majority of homes tested have lead levels below the EPA's action level.

However, water can leach lead from plumbing materials within your home which cannot be controlled by BCWS.

Lead levels in your drinking water are likely to be highest if:

- Your home has faucets or fittings made of brass
- Your home has lead pipes
- Your home has copper pipes with lead solder and the house is less than 5 years old
- Water often sits in the pipes for several hours



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Lead and Copper Fact Sheet



BCWS' Lead and Copper Monitoring Program

There are two parts to our Lead and Copper program; a residential tap monitoring program and a water quality monitoring program.

- The residential tap monitoring program consists of samples that must come from homes that have specific age and plumbing materials as defined by the EPA. Currently, we are on a monitoring schedule of once every three years for these samples.
- BCWS also conducts regularly scheduled water quality monitoring in our distribution system and at our entry points. The limits for water quality parameters have been specified by EPA which we continue to meet and monitor per our required schedule.

The EPA action level for lead is 15ug/l and for copper it is 1300 ug/l. The action level is the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

The EPA maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG) for lead is 0 ug/l and for copper is 1300 ug/l. MCLG is the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

Compliance for residential tap monitoring is calculated by comparing the 90th percentile sample of all the samples collected during each monitoring round with the EPA action levels.

BCWS has been in compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule for all previous rounds of monitoring. BCWS' compliance data is reported to our customers in the Water Quality Report that we mail annually.

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.

For More Information

Additional information on lead in drinking water is available from the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline 1-800-426-4791 or at

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

Steps you can take to minimize your exposure to lead in drinking water

Let water run from the faucet before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than six hours.

The longer water resides in your home's plumbing, the more lead it may contain. Let the water run until it gets noticeably colder, usually about 30 seconds to 2 minutes.

Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of your home's plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking.

To conserve water, fill a couple of bottles for drinking water after flushing the faucet, and whenever possible use the first flush water for purposes other than consumption such as watering houseplants.

Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water faucet.

Hot water can dissolve lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold water faucet and heat it on the stove. Never use water from the hot water faucet to prepare baby formula.

Periodically remove the strainers and flush out any debris that has accumulated over time.

If you have recently replaced plumbing or fixtures in your home, remove loose lead solder and debris by removing the faucet strainers from all taps and running the water from 3 to 5 minutes.