



Test Your Home's Drinking Water

Testing your home's drinking water is the only way to confirm if lead is present. Most water systems test for lead at a certain number of homes as a regular part of water monitoring. These tests give a system-wide picture of whether or not corrosion is being controlled but do not reflect conditions at each home served by that water system. Since each home has different plumbing pipes and materials, test results are likely to be different for each home.

You may want to test your water if:

- Your home has lead pipes (lead is a dull gray metal that is soft enough to be easily scratched with a house key); or
- Your non-plastic plumbing was installed before 1986.

You can buy lead testing kits in home improvement stores to collect samples to then send to a laboratory for analysis. EPA recommends sending samples to a certified laboratory for analysis; lists are available from [state or local drinking water authority](#). Your water supplier may also have useful information, including whether the service line connecting your home to the water main is made of lead.

Find local contact information for testing your water for lead by calling EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791.

If your home tests positive for lead:

- **Flush your pipes before drinking, and only use cold water for cooking and drinking.** Anytime the water in a particular faucet has not been used for six hours or longer, flush your cold-water pipes by running the water until it becomes cold. Contact your water utility to verify flushing times for your area.
- **Consider replacing lead-containing plumbing fixtures.** If you are considering this, keep in mind that the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires that only lead-free pipe, solder, or flux may be used in the installation or repair of a public water system, or any plumbing in residential or non-residential facility providing water for human consumption. "Lead-free" under the SDWA means that solders and flux may not contain more than 0.2 percent lead, and pipe, pipe fittings, and well pumps may not contain more than 8.0 percent lead. Beginning January 2014, changes to the Safe Drinking Water Act will further reduce the maximum allowable lead content of pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, and fixtures to 0.25 percent.

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires plumbing fittings and fixtures intended to dispense water for human consumption (e.g., kitchen and bathroom faucets) meet a lead leaching standard. Read more: <https://www.epa.gov/dwstandardsregulations/use-lead-free-pipes-fittings-fixtures-solder-and-flux-drinking-water>.

- [Basic information about lead in drinking water](#)