

Lead in Drinking Water – Public and Nonpublic Schools

Updated in response to legislation effective as of June 1, 2021

IMPORTANT NOTICE: ELEVATED LEAD WATER SAMPLE RESULTS **Watershed Public Charter School**

ELEVATED LEAD WATER SAMPLE RESULT(S)

All Maryland public and nonpublic schools are required to sample all drinking water outlets for the presence of lead pursuant to the Code of Maryland Regulations. On **January 25, 2024** lead water samples were collected from **Watershed Public Charter School**. Of these lead water samples, **2** had levels of lead exceeding the State's revised action level of 5 parts per billion (ppb) (*formerly 20 ppb; 5 ppb effective June 1, 2021*) for lead in drinking water in school buildings. The elevated lead results from the sample(s) collected at **Watershed Public Charter School** were as follows:

- 5.1 parts per billion (ppb), Kitchen Sink
- 1.2 ppb, Nurse Water Cooler
- 2.7 ppb, 1st Floor Water Cooler
- 2.4 ppb, 2nd Floor Water Cooler
- 5.9 ppb, Kitchen Ice Machine

ACTION LEVEL (AL)

Effective June 1, 2021, the State's AL for lead in drinking water samples collected from outlets in school buildings has been lowered to 5 ppb. The AL is the concentration of lead which, if exceeded, triggers required remediation of drinking water outlets.

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. Lead is stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the fetus receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development. 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.

SOURCES OF HUMAN EXPOSURE TO LEAD

There are many different sources of human exposure to lead. These sources include: lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust or soil, some plumbing materials, certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics, exposure in the workplace and exposure from certain hobbies, brass faucets, fittings, and valves. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water, while for an infant consuming formula mixed with lead-containing water this may increase to 40 to 60 percent.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TAKEN

Less than 24 hours after Watershed received the results of the January 11, 2024 first-draw water samples, bottled water was provided to all classrooms, in the nurse's suite and for the YMCA's before and after-care program. Watershed arranged for Jenkins Environmental to return Watershed on January 25, 2024 to retest the water outlets. All water bottle stations that receive water from the pipes in the

building were unplugged and labeled as unusable before students entered the building. On January 26, 2024, bottled water coolers were made available on each floor and in the nurse's suite. Signs were posted near each non-consumable faucet (i.e. bathroom sinks and art room) with bilingual text and pictures that state the faucet is only to be used for hand-washing and not for drinking.

NEXT STEPS

Now that a flush sample has been taken from the consumable outlets, 3 of the 5 outlets are below the AL. The 3 outlets that are below the AL are the 1st and 2nd floor water coolers as well as the water cooler in the nurse's suite. Even though the water coolers in the school are below AL, Watershed will continue using bottle water for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.

The kitchen sink and the kitchen ice machine are still above AL. Jenkins Environmental and Baltimore County Public School's Office of Food and Nutrition said that after a 30 second daily flush, the kitchen sink can be used. Jenkins Environmental said that there is minimal risk from using the kitchen sink to wash produce. Watershed will continue to work with Jenkins Environmental and BCPS to continue to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water.

TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER:

1. Run your water to flush out lead: If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 15 to 30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking.
2. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula: Lead from the plumbing dissolves more easily into hot water.

Please note that boiling the water will not reduce lead levels.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information, please contact **Christina Sawyer** at **443-809-2100**. For additional information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead. If you are concerned about exposure; contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead.