



The Town of Boone Public Utilities Department *presents*

Facts About Lead In Your Drinking Water

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and The Town of Boone Water Treatment Plant are concerned about lead in your drinking water. Although most homes have very low levels of lead in their drinking water, some homes in the community have lead levels above the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), or 0.015 milligrams of lead per liter of water. Under Federal law we are required to have a program in place to minimize lead in your drinking water. This program includes corrosion control treatment, source water treatment, and public education. We would also be required to replace any lead service lines. We have no lead service lines in our distribution system. If you have any questions, call us at 262 8209; 4570. This brochure explains the simple steps you can take to protect you and your family by reducing your exposure to lead in drinking water.

Health effects of lead: Lead is a common metal found throughout the environment in lead 8209;base paint, air, soil, household dust, food, certain types of pottery, porcelain and pewter, and water. Lead can pose a significant risk to your health if too much of it enters your body. Lead builds up in your body over many years and can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells, and kidneys. The greater risk is to young children and pregnant women. Amounts of lead that won't hurt adults can slow down normal mental and physical development of growing bodies. In addition, a child at play often comes in contact with sources of lead contamination like dirt and dust that rarely affect an adult. It is important to wash children's hands and toys often, and try to make sure they only put food in their mouths.

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formulas and concentrated juices that are mixed with water. The EPA estimated that drinking water can make up 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead.

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead 8209;base solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome plated brass faucets. In 1986 Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes and other plumbing materials to 8.0%

When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon after returning from school or work, can contain fairly high levels of lead. **LETTING THE TAP RUN FOR 30 SECONDS WILL GET RID OF MOST OF THE LEAD.**

Steps you can take in the home to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water.

Despite our best efforts mentioned earlier to control water corrosivity and remove lead from the water supply, lead levels in some homes or buildings can be high. To find out whether you need to take action in your own home, have your drinking water tested to determine if it contains excessive concentrations of lead. Testing water is essential because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water. Some laboratories that can provide this service are listed at the end of this booklet. For more information on having your water tested, please call the water plant at 262 5170.

If a water test indicates that the drinking water drawn from a tap in your home contains lead above 15 ppb, then you should take the following precautions:

A. LET THE WATER RUN FOR 30 SECONDS FROM THE TAP BEFORE USING IT FOR COOKING OR DRINKING ANY TIME THE WATER IN A FAUCET HAS GONE UNUSED FOR MORE THAN SIX HOURS. The longer water resides in your home's plumbing the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 15 to 30 seconds. If your house has a lead service line to the water main, you may have to flush the water for a longer time, perhaps one minute, before drinking. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of your home's plumbing system, you need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or

cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your family's health. It usually takes less than one or two gallons of water and costs less than 25 cents per month. To conserve water, fill a couple of bottles for drinking water after flushing the tap, and whenever possible use the first flush water to water the plants. If you live in a high rise building, letting the flow before using it may not work to lessen your risk from lead. The plumbing systems have more, and sometimes larger pipes than smaller buildings. Ask your landlord for help in locating the source of the lead and for advice on reducing the lead level.

B. TRY NOT TO COOK WITH, OR DRINK WATER FROM THE HOT WATER TAP. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and heat it on the stove.

C. Remove loose lead solder and debris from the plumbing materials installed in newly constructed homes, or homes in which the plumbing has recently been replaced, by removing the faucet strainers from all the taps and running the water from 3 to 5 minutes. Thereafter, periodically remove the strainers and flush out any debris that has accumulated over time.

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the plumber who did the work and request that he or she replace the lead solder with lead-free solder. Lead solder looks gray, and when scratched with a key looks shiny. In addition, notify the NC Dept. of Health, Environment, and Natural Resources about the violation.

E. The Town of Boone's Water System has no lead service lines.

F. Have an electrician check your wiring. If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electric code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. DO NOT attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards.

The steps described above will reduce the lead concentrations in your drinking water. However, if a water test indicates that the drinking water coming from your tap contains lead concentrations in excess of 15 ppb after flushing, or after we have completed our actions to minimize lead levels, then you may want to take the following additional measures:

A. Purchase or lease a home treatment device.

B. Purchase bottled water for drinking and cooking.

You can consult a variety of sources for additional information. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about health effects of lead. State and local government agencies that can be contacted include; Boone Water Plant at 262 4574, Boone Planning and Inspections at 262 8209; 4540, Appalachian District Health Dept. at 264 4995, and the NC Division of Environmental Health at (919) 733 8209; 2321.

The following is a list of some State approved labs that can test your water for lead:

Environmental Quality Institute, UNC Asheville at (828) 251 6104

Water Quality Services in Banner Elk at (828) 898 6277

If you have any questions or concerns about the condition of your drinking water, please don't hesitate to contact us.