

How Lead Plumbing Affects Water Quality

City of Tallahassee Water Quality

The drinking water delivered to your home by the City of Tallahassee is safe, reliable and surpasses all regulatory standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Florida Department of Health (DOH).

Ponder Your Plumbing

Lead (Pb) was a commonly used pipe and plumbing material until the 1930s. After that time, molten lead (or solder) was commonly used as a pipe joint sealant until it was banned from use in 1986.

Homes and businesses built before the mid- 1980s may have plumbing components made with lead or lead-brass alloys, or pipe or fittings joined with solder that contains lead. However, the presence of lead in pipe and plumbing does not necessarily mean that lead will be present in your drinking water. When corrosion occurs in plumbing components that contain lead, it is possible for the material to enter the drinking water. This reaction is more likely in hot water and water that is considered corrosive. Fortunately, the City of Tallahassee's water is generally characterized as non-corrosive, with an average pH value of 7.0 to 7.5.

Why be concerned about lead?

Lead can cause significant health problems for humans and animals. According to health experts, lead is particularly harmful for young children and pregnant women, as it can negatively impact physical growth, critical organ development and brain development in growing children. Lead exposure can also be harmful to adults; it can cause increased blood pressure (hypertension) and negatively affect cardiovascular, kidney, and reproductive function.

What Steps Can I Take to Reduce the Risk of Lead Exposure?

If your home or business was built before 1986 or you have a concern regarding your in-home water quality, have your drinking water tested by an accredited laboratory that is certified to test for lead in drinking water. City of Tallahassee water customers can request an in-home water quality test at no cost. To schedule an in-home water quality test, please call 850-891-1200.

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Your Own UtilitiesSM

If lead is present, work with a licensed plumbing contractor to identify and replace household plumbing and fixtures that may be contributing to the presence of lead.

If you choose not to replace older plumbing or fixtures containing lead in your home or business, consider using a *point-of-use water faucet filter* or *filter pitcher* that is certified for lead removal. Use filtered water for drinking, brushing your teeth, food preparation and cooking until you can replace lead plumbing and fixtures.



PUR Model FM2500V Faucet Filter and Brita Soho Water Pitcher with Elite™ Filter are two examples of point-of-use filters certified for lead removal.

You can also reduce the potential for lead exposure from drinking water by taking the following precautionary steps:

- Run your faucet a bit before use. Thirty seconds to a minute is usually sufficient. This is particularly important after prolonged periods of limited or no use (i.e., after sleeping, vacations, closed business hours, etc.). Bringing fresh water into your plumbing before use will help ensure that any dissolved lead has been flushed out of the plumbing and fixtures.
- Use water only from the cold tap for drinking, brushing your teeth, food preparation and cooking, as hot water can dissolve lead more quickly than cold water.
- Clean or change your faucet aerator screens regularly. Sediment, calcium and lead deposits from your plumbing can accumulate on the screens and contribute to poor water quality and lower flow at the faucet.

Note that lead does not absorb through the skin, so showering or bathing with hot water does not pose a risk.

Want to Learn More?

To learn more about how you can protect your family from the risks associated with lead exposure, visit the following online resources:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/lead-poisoning/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm>

<http://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead#testdw>

https://info.nsf.org/Certified/DWTU/listings_leadreduction.asp?ProductFunction=053%7CLead+Reduction&ProductFunction=058%7CLead+Reduction&ProductType=&submit2=Search