

How does lead get into my water?

Lead, a metal found in natural deposits, is harmful to human health. The most common exposure to lead is swallowing or breathing in lead paint chips and dust. However, lead in drinking water can also be a source of lead exposure. In the past, lead was used in some water service lines and household plumbing materials. Lead in water usually occurs through corrosion of plumbing products containing lead; however, disruption (construction or maintenance) of lead service lines may also temporarily increase lead levels in the water supply. This disruption may be sometimes caused by water main maintenance/replacement. As of January 14, 2014, new household plumbing materials shall not contain more than 0.25% lead on surfaces that come in contact with drinking water.

Health effects of lead

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much lead 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 the 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

Call the Public Works Dept. at (630) 554-3242 or email at publicworks@oswegoil.org.

Water meter replacement program

During your water meter replacement, your home's plumbing system may be disturbed and may affect the lead content in your water at your faucet. You can follow simple steps to reduce the potential exposure to lead in your drinking water after your water meter replacement.

What to do to reduce your potential exposure to lead

1. Run your water to flush your service line. If the water has not been used for more than 6 hours, run the cold water tap for 3 to 5 minutes or until the water is noticeably colder.
2. Use cold water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula. Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water.
3. Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will NOT remove lead and may increase the concentration of lead in the water.
4. Clean your faucet aerators and screens regularly. Particles containing lead from solder or household plumbing can become trapped in your faucet aerator. Regular cleaning every few months can remove these particles.
5. Consider using a filter. Make sure the filter is certified to remove "total lead."

This notice contains important information about lead in drinking water. Lead is not found at elevated levels in Oswego's water towers or distribution system. Oswego is required by the IEPA to sample for lead every three years. The most recent sample year was 2017. You can find more information about lead and Oswego's water quality at: <http://www.oswegoil.org/pdf/2017-water-quality-report.pdf>

Important Information About Lead in Drinking Water



Test your water for lead

Call the Public Works Department at (630) 554-3242 to find out how to get your water tested for lead. The Village takes lead samples every three years per state regulations and the results are provided in the annual water quality report. If you would like to have your home tested, we can provide a list of laboratories certified to do the testing. The Village does not do the testing for individual residence. The laboratories will send you the sample bottles and instructions on how to take your sample. The Village can answer any questions you may have about the testing process. The cost of the test is the resident's responsibility. The EPA also has information about lead risks and mitigation at www.epa.gov/lead. Your health care provider may also be able to provide resources.

What is Oswego doing to prevent lead in drinking water?

The Village pumps water from deep limestone aquifers and no lead has been found in our wells. The water is treated with an anti-corrosion agent that coats the inside of plumbing fixtures to help prevent the leaching of lead from lead service lines and plumbing fixtures into the water. As water mains are replaced, the Village replaces the portion of the property's water service pipe from the connection at the water main to the curb stop (valve) located in the public right-of-way with copper. The property owner is responsible for the water service from the curb stop into the building. Property owners are encouraged to replace lead water service lines and older plumbing fixtures that may still contain lead.



Figure 1



Figure 2

What is a lead water service and how do I know if I have one?

A lead service line is the pipe that provides drinking water to your home from the water main in the Village right-of-way. Lead service lines are generally a dull gray color. You can identify them easily by carefully scratching with a key or coin. If the pipe is made of lead, the area you scratched will turn bright silver in color. Do not use a knife or other sharp instrument as you may puncture a hole in the pipe. Lead service lines may be connected to your home's plumbing as it enters the building using solder and have a typical "bulb" at the end near the shut off valve. You can use the following guidelines to help you determine if you have a lead service line in your home:

- Homes constructed before 1930 will most likely have a lead water service unless it was replaced during a recent renovation.
- Homes constructed between the 1930's and 1960's may have a lead service line. (lead plumbing material was being phased out at this time but was still used)
- Homes constructed after the 1960's will most likely have a copper water service line. (lead was banned by the U.S. EPA in 1986 for use in water service lines)

Start by locating your water meter in your home. Look at the portion of the pipe that enters the home through the floor or foundation from the outside and connects to the water meter. Figure 1 illustrates the typical "bulb" before the shut-off valve and meter. Figure 2 illustrates the scratch method to determine if the pipe is made of lead. Having a lead water service line does not necessarily mean you have lead in your water. However, it does indicate that you may be at a higher risk for consuming lead if pipe corrosion occurs.



Contact Us

Village of Oswego
100 Theodore Dr.
Oswego, IL 60543
Ph: (630) 554-3242

Email: publicworks@oswegoil.org

Hours:

Monday - Friday 7 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Sat and Sun: Closed.

www.oswegoil.org