
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Hibbing Public Utilities found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. Please read this notice closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

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. 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.

Sources of Lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes).

New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free." However, plumbing fixtures labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified may only have up to 2 percent lead. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

Hibbing Public Utilities provides drinking water to its residents solely from a groundwater source: seven wells ranging from 100 to 505 feet in depth that draw water from the Biwabik Iron-Formation aquifer, the Quaternary Buried Artesian aquifer, and the Quaternary Water Table aquifer. Wells pump water to the Hibbing Water Treatment plant which is treated for iron and manganese. The water is then chlorinated, fluoridated, and pumped to a 1-million gallon ground storage reservoir. Booster pumps distribute the water from the reservoir on demand through 18-inch diameter and a 30-inch diameter distribution lines. The Hibbing water main infrastructure is made up of various sized polyethylene, ductile and cast iron piping. Service lines are made up copper or lead piping.

Source water from Hibbing Public Utilities wells, its ground storage reservoir, elevated storage towers and its distribution mains are lead free.

When water is in contact with pipes (or service lines) and/or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New homes may also have lead; even "lead-free" plumbing may contain some lead.

EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Don't forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

Steps You Can Take To Reduce Your Exposure To Lead In Your Water:

- ▶ **Run your water to flush out lead.** Run water for 30 - 60 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
- ▶ **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
- ▶ **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- ▶ **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality.
- ▶ **Test your water for lead.** Call us at (218) 262-7725 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.
- ▶ **Get your child tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.
- ▶ **Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.** New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8% lead to be labeled as "lead free." Visit the National Sanitation Foundation Web site at www.nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

What Happened? What is Being Done?

Hibbing Public Utilities exceeded the Minnesota Department of Health Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) for lead and copper in calendar year 2010. This result is based on a 90th percentile comparison of 30 samples taken at various residential homes in Hibbing and tested for lead and copper levels. From years 1994 to 2009, the HPUC met the MCL goal, except for year 2007 when the level was exceeded for copper.

The HPUC will be working with the Minnesota Department of Health in conducting an aggressive lead and copper water testing program in the coming months to help determine any high level trends. Efforts are being taken to reduce lead levels, such as corrosion control treatment and lead service line replacement. A public educational campaign is also being conducted in Hibbing to raise awareness on the facts of lead and copper in drinking water.

For More Information

Call: Corey Lubovich, Director of Utility Operations at (218) 262-7725 or visit our Web site at www.hpuc.com. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.

This notice is brought to you by Hibbing Public Utilities. State Water System ID# 1690022. Date: December 2, 2010