



MADISON WATER UTILITY  
119 E. Olin Avenue  
Madison, WI 53713

**LEAD  
IN  
WATER**

Information for Consumers  
provided by

*Quality and Reliability since 1932*  
**Madison  
Water  
Utility**

[www.madisonwater.org](http://www.madisonwater.org)

## LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Public Health Department of Madison and Dane County, and Madison Water Utility are concerned about lead in drinking water. Although most homes have very low levels of lead, if any, in their drinking water, some homes in the community have lead levels above the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb) or 15 micrograms of lead per liter ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ) of water.

There is no significant amount of lead in the groundwater Madison pumps for its water supply. The naturally corrosive nature of our groundwater, however, can dissolve or corrode lead through contact with water service lines, interior pipes, and plumbing fixtures. Elevated levels of lead in drinking water from these sources have been linked to health problems. Consequently, EPA requires that the levels of lead in drinking water be limited. Studies in Madison show that the primary source of lead in drinking water is from lead water service lines found in homes built before about 1928.

This brochure provides information about what Madison Water Utility is doing and what you can do to minimize exposure to lead in drinking water.

## Health Effects of Lead and Exposure to Lead in the Environment

Developing fetuses, infants and young children have a higher sensitivity than the general population to lead. Exposure to lead may result in delays in physical or mental development. Children could show deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults exposed to high levels of lead over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

Lead from lead-based paints in older homes is generally considered a greater risk than lead in drinking water. It is, however, the combined effects of all sources of lead in the environment that is of concern, and individuals should reduce exposure to all of those sources of lead to the extent possible.

Consult your physician if you suspect high blood lead levels in your children or other family members. If you have any concern about the lead levels in your tap water, you can have your water tested by a certified lab listed at the end of this brochure. Proper sampling methods for testing lead levels are very important, and lead levels may vary significantly in different samples taken at different times from the same home.

For information about water sampling and interpreting test results or if you need information to determine if you have a lead water service line at your home, contact us by calling our Lead Information Line at 264-LEAD (264-5323) or by sending an email to [water@cityofmadison.com](mailto:water@cityofmadison.com). If you have questions about lead paint or other sources of lead in the environment, contact Public Health at 266-4821.

## Steps You Can Take to Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water

If there is a lead water service line at your home or business or if a lead water service line has been removed, you should take the following precautions while any lead pipe is still in service and for at least three years after the lead pipe is replaced

- Always flush the plumbing before drawing water for drinking, cooking, or preparing infant formula. Let water run from the cold-water tap for at least 30 seconds after it is noticeably colder than the first-draw water. This flushing process replaces water in the house plumbing and the service line with fresh water from the water main.
- In order to obtain hot water for food or drink preparation, always draw water from the cold-water tap—after having flushed the lines as described above—and heat it on the stove or in the microwave.
- Regularly remove faucet aerators and clean them, removing any particles caught in the screen.
- If you have a water filter (plumbed-in, tap-attached, or carafe-type), replace the filters frequently, at least as often as the manufacturer recommends.
- Consumers in households with small children or with a woman who is pregnant or who may become pregnant, as an extra precaution, may decide to filter water or to purchase purified water for drinking and preparing infant formula. If you buy a water filter, be sure it is approved for removal of lead, and be sure to operate and maintain it according to manufacturer specifications. Information about filters

approved for lead removal can be obtained from the Wisconsin Dept. of Commerce, Plumbing Product Review section by calling 267-1401 or emailing [productech@commerce.state.wi.us](mailto:productech@commerce.state.wi.us). If you purchase purified water, check its contents—it may not contain fluoride or other minerals beneficial to your health and your child's health.

- Talk to and follow the advice of your physician or your child's pediatrician about lead health hazards and blood lead levels.

## Actions Madison Water Utility Is Taking to Reduce Lead Exposure

In accordance with directives from the U.S. EPA, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources and City of Madison Ordinances, Madison Water Utility will ensure replacement of all lead water service lines in its system by 2011. Customers with lead service lines on their private property must replace their lead service lines at the same time the Water Utility replaces its service line to the property or in accordance with a schedule established by the Utility. The Water Utility notifies customers in writing of the schedules and deadlines for their service line replacements. Customers who replace their lead service lines in accordance with the City Ordinance and the schedule established by the Utility are eligible for reimbursement of half the cost of replacement not to exceed \$1,000. Answers to questions about the Utility's lead service replacement program can be found at [www.madisonwater.org](http://www.madisonwater.org), or by contacting our Lead Information line: 264-LEAD (264-5323), or via email at [water@cityofmadison.com](mailto:water@cityofmadison.com).

## Contacts for More Information

- For general information and for information about the Utility's Lead Service Replacement Program, contact the Madison Water Utility Lead Information Line at 264-LEAD (264-5323) or [water@cityofmadison.com](mailto:water@cityofmadison.com). Additional information is available at the Utility's web site at [www.madisonwater.org](http://www.madisonwater.org).
- For information about the health effects of lead, other sources of lead in the environment, and how you can get your child's blood tested for lead levels, call John Hausbeck at Public Health, 294-5315 or [jhausbeck@cityofmadison.com](mailto:jhausbeck@cityofmadison.com), or visit the City's Public Health web site at [www.cityofmadison.com/health](http://www.cityofmadison.com/health). Such information can also be obtained from the State of Wisconsin, Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Health at 266-5817.
- Additional information on lead exposure and its effects can be obtained by contacting the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (424-5323) or by visiting EPA's web site at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead).
- Your family doctor or child's pediatrician can provide you with information and advice with respect to lead health hazards and blood lead levels.



## Testing for Lead

Following is a list of State-approved laboratories in Madison that you can call to have your water tested for lead. (Note: A single test for lead level in drinking

*water may not be representative of the level at all times or of the average level over time.)*

**State Lab of Hygiene**  
2601 Agriculture Drive  
Madison, WI 53707  
224-6202

**Public Health Laboratory**  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd  
Madison, WI 53709  
266-4821

**MADISON WATER UTILITY**  
119 East Olin Avenue  
Madison, WI 53713

Lead Information Line  
264-LEAD (264-5323)

General Information  
266-4651

Public Health  
266-4821

Lead Information Email  
[water@cityofmadison.com](mailto:water@cityofmadison.com)

Web Site  
[www.cityofmadison.com/health/envhealth/](http://www.cityofmadison.com/health/envhealth/)