

# THE YORK WATER COMPANY

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## Lead and Your Drinking Water

Recent testing has indicated that some homes in this community, particularly those homes with lead service lines built before 1935, may have elevated lead levels in their drinking water. According to the EPA, lead can pose a significant risk to your health. Even if you do not have a pre-1935 home, lead may enter the drinking water from various sources in your plumbing. All of our customers should read this pamphlet for further information.



"That good York water"  
SINCE 1816

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER.

**York Water found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.**

### Health Effects Of Lead, According to the US EPA:

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 areas like York, many older homes contain lead-based paint. Lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the workplace and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry.

### Lead In Drinking Water

Lead in drinking water can increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formulas and concentrated juices that are mixed with water.

### How Lead Enters Our Water

Unlike most drinking water contaminants, lead is unusual in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome-plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect your house to the water main (Lead Service Line). 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 work or school, can contain fairly high levels of lead. In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead.

Most faucets purchased prior to 1997 were constructed of brass or chrome-plated brass, which contain up to 8% lead. In 2014, all new faucets sold are defined as "lead free" and contain no more than a weighted average of 0.25% lead in relation to wetted surface.

A property that had a house built on it before around 1935 may have a lead service line. Recent tests indicate that higher lead levels may be more likely to occur in houses with lead service lines. As of 2016, about 3% of York's customers have company-owned lead service lines. Although only a small percentage of lead service lines may be exceeding the action level, York Water is programming to replace all company-owned lead service lines by 2020.

### Steps to Reduce Exposure to Lead In Drinking Water

If a water test indicates that the drinking water drawn from a tap in your home contains lead above 15 ppb, or if you would like to reduce lead levels, then you should take the following precautions:

**1. To flush, let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking.** The longer water resides in your home's plumbing, the more lead it may contain. If the water has sat unused for more than 6 hours, flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 15-30 seconds. If your house has a lead service line to the water main, you may have to flush the water for a longer time, about 3 gallons of water, which should take about 3 minutes, before drinking. Toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of your home's plumbing system, but you still need to flush the water in each faucet about 15-30 seconds before using it for drinking or cooking.

**2. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula. Lead dissolves more easily in hot water.

**3. Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.

**4. Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** The NSF Consumer Affairs Office has specific information about lead treatment at:

<http://www.nsf.org/consumer-resources/health-and-safety-tips/water-quality-treatment-tips/lead-in-drinking-water>

### **5. Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.**

There are lead check swabs that can detect lead on plumbing surfaces such as solder and pipes. These swabs can be purchased at plumbing and home improvement stores. Consider having lead-containing pipes and fixtures replaced, or use the precautions listed above.

### **6. If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater.**

Check with a licensed electrician or your local electrical 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.

### **For More Information**

Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead.

### **What Did York Water Find And What Is Being Done to Reduce Lead?**

York Water is required to routinely test at least 50 high-risk homes/buildings to see if there's any lead at their water tap. A high risk home has been determined to contain a lead service line, leaded solder, or plumbing fixtures with lead. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designates a threshold that if more than 5 of those 50 tests exceed their action level of 15 PPB, then we need to initiate additional activities to reduce the amount of lead in the water. We had 6 samples exceed the action level. Although our tests indicate that the action level was only exceeded at a small percentage of homes with lead service lines built prior to 1935, York Water is providing this pamphlet to all of our customers to help educate you on how to reduce all sources of lead in your drinking water.

### **York Water's Program to Reduce Lead Includes:**

#### **1. Corrosion Control Treatment.**

Treating the water to make it less likely that lead will dissolve into the water.

#### **2. Lead Service Line Replacement.**

We have been replacing company-owned lead service lines and have programmed to have them all removed by 2020.

#### **3. Public Education Program.**

For example, this pamphlet that shows you how to reduce lead in your water.

We suggest that any of our customers with concerns request to have their water tested. The following is a list of some state approved laboratories in our area that you can call to have your water tested for lead. This test would be completed at your cost:

- Analytical Laboratory Services, Inc. 717-944-5541
- LABS, Inc. 717-259-6550
- Microbac Labs 717-763-0582

For more information, call us at 717-845-3601 or visit our website at [www.yorkwater.com](http://www.yorkwater.com). For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's web site at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your health care provider.

**Parte del proposito de esta aviso es notificarle de los posibles efectos adversos a su salud por cause del plomo en su agua. Si le gustaria obtener este aviso en Español, por favor comuniquese con nosotros al telefono 717-801-8406.**