

WATER WATCH



Frequently Asked Questions

The following frequently asked questions can help provide you with more information about lead and copper. Can also help you limit exposure to lead and copper which has been linked to adverse health effects.

What is Lead ?

Lead is a naturally occurring element found in small amounts in the earth's crust. Lead can be found in all parts of our environment including air, soil, water & our homes & is harmful if inhaled or swallowed.

How do I become exposed to Lead ?

The most common source of lead exposure is from lead based paint and lead contaminated dust in homes & buildings built before 1978. Other sources include air, water & soil.

Is the drinking water in Rensselaer safe ?

Yes, the drinking water produced at our treatment facility is safe. There is no lead present in the drinking water that leaves the treatment plant. The City of Rensselaer regularly monitors tap water in the distribution system in accordance with the U.S EPA's Lead & Copper Rule.

What is the City of Rensselaer doing to minimize lead exposure in our drinking water ?

In addition to regular water quality monitoring, we take careful steps during the water treatment process to ensure corrosive elements do not cause lead to leach out of customer owned lead service lines or plumbing. In an abundance of caution, the City of Rensselaer also feeds an orthophosphate blend into its finished water to sequester the interior of mains, service lines or plumbing to prevent lead leaching.

Is my home at risk for lead plumbing ?

The "lead ban" was issued by congress in 1986 that stated, public water systems & anyone else who intends to install or repair drinking water plumbing connected to a public water system must use lead free materials. Therefore, homes built on or after 1988 are far less likely to have have a lead service line or lead solder.

What are the risks of lead exposure ?

Lead can cause a variety of adverse health effects when exposed. These effects may include increased risk of high blood pressure, kidney damage as well as delays in physical & mental development in young children.

Does the City of Rensselaer test for lead & copper in drinking water ?

Yes, the Water Department coordinates lead & copper testing at a selected number of high risk homes in accordance with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) guidance & oversight. These sample results are then provided to the customers who had their water tested. These results are available for review in the annual Consumer Confidence Report & have consistently been below EPA action level requirements of 15ppb.

How can I find out if I have lead in my drinking water ?

Customers can have their water tested through a certified lab. Labs certified to test lead and copper in drinking water can be found at www.in.gov/isdh. Customers may also purchase an at home water analysis kit from their local retail store.

You cannot see, taste or smell lead in drinking water. Testing is the only way of telling whether there are harmful levels of lead in your drinking water.

How can I determine if my home has a lead service line or plumbing ?

Lead is a soft, dull gray metal. It can easily be scratched with a house key, take care to not puncture the service line. Another way to determine if you have a lead service line is to use a magnet. If the magnet sticks to line or solder, it is not lead. If you suspect you have lead pipes or lead solder but are not sure, consult with a licensed plumber.

Will the City replace my lead service line ?

Under normal circumstances the service line from the property line into the home or business is not part of the public water system and is the customers responsibility. However, the City of Rensselaer has been mandated to replace all lead service lines on or before 2037. Therefore, if you have a lead service line, the City will replace your service line from the main to 1' inside your home or business. The only cost to be incurred by the customer would be hiring a licensed plumber to reconnect the new service line to the existing premise plumbing.

Where can i get more information about lead in drinking water ?

More information is available on the U.S EPA website, basic information about lead in drinking water, at epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water.

Should I test my children for exposure to lead ?

Children at risk of exposure to lead should be tested. Your doctor or the Jasper County Health Department can perform a simple blood test to determine your child's blood - lead level.

Where can I find additional information about lead in drinking water & health risks ?

Review the City of Rensselaer annual Consumer Confidence Report for other information about your drinking water. You may also contact the Water Department at (219) 866-5530.



How can I reduce my exposure to lead in my drinking water ?

- If you have a lead service line or plumbing, the best step you can take is to have them replaced. You can also reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water by taking these actions:
- Run your water to flush out lead. If it hasn't been used for several hours, run the water for three to five minutes to clear most of the lead from the water.
- Always use cold water for drinking, cooking & preparing baby formula. Never cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Never use water from the hot water tap to make formula.
- Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- Periodically remove & clean your faucet screen/aerator. While removed, run the water to eliminate debris.
- Consider investing in a home water treatment device, when purchasing a water treatment device, make sure it is certified under NSF/ANSI Standard 53 to remove lead.
- Identify & replace plumbing fixtures containing lead. Brass faucets, fittings & valves may leach lead into drinking water. Products sold after January 4, 2014, must by law contain very low levels of lead.
- Have a licensed electrician check your wiring. Your home electrical system may be attached to your service line or somewhere else in your premise plumbing. If this connection is electrified, it can accelerate corrosion. Check with a licensed electrician to correct ground faults & evaluate your local electrical code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. DO NOT attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper bonding or grounding can cause electrical shock and/or fire hazards.

Lead & Drinking Water Safety !

Lead mitigation take all of us, reducing exposure is a shared responsibility of the City of Rensselaer Water Department and the customer. While we provide safe & quality drinking water to your home or business. We strongly encourage residents to identify & remove any lead pipes or plumbing materials serving your home or business.

Drinking water is free of lead when it leaves our treatment facility. Once the water comes into contact with pipes and plumbing fixtures that contain lead, lead particles can be released. Lead sources & lead levels vary between locations, therefore, it is crucial to identify and remove any lead sources in each home or business.

If lead is present, pregnant or nursing women & children under the age of 6 should use filtered tap water for drinking water & cooking until all lead sources are removed. Filters certified for lead removal are required to meet National Sanitary Foundation (NSF) Standard 53. For more information on the NSF certification, visit <https://www.nsf.org/knowledge-library/lead-in-drinking-water>.

