

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

The Village of Mt. Zion Water Department 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, 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. To the best of our knowledge the water mains owned and operated by the Village of Mt. Zion do not contain lead materials, nor does the treated source water from the City of Decatur. However, service lines, owned by homeowners that connect to the village's water mains and carry water from the water main to your home may contain lead. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures and solder. 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.

If you have children, particularly under the age of six, it is highly recommended that you have a lead blood test performed on them to determine their blood lead level. This can be done by your child's doctor's office or may be available at your local public health department or WIC location.

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Your Water

If the level of lead found in your drinking water is above 15 ppb or if you are concerned about the lead levels at your location, there are several things you can do:

1. **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures that contain lead.** New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. As of June 19, 1986, new or replaced water service lines and new household plumbing materials could not contain more than 8% lead. Lead content was further reduced on January 4, 2014, when plumbing materials must now be certified as "lead-free" to be used (weighted average of wetted surface cannot be more than 0.25% lead). Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

2. **Run your water to flush out lead.** If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water from your kitchen tap or whatever tap you use for drinking and cooking for 3 – 5 minutes. This will help flush lead-containing water from the pipes.
3. **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. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
4. **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
5. **Consider using a filter or look for alternative sources of water.** Make sure the filter is certified to remove "total lead". Bottled drinking water should be used by pregnant women, breast-feeding women, young children, and formula-fed infants at homes where lead has been detected at levels greater than 15 ppb.
6. **Test your water for lead.** Call us at the number below to find out how to get your water tested for lead.

What Happened? What is Being Done?

The Village purchases pre-treated finished Lake Decatur water from the City of Decatur. The water is treated with lime to soften water, and the treated water leaves behind a calcium carbonate coating on pipes to help prevent the leaching of lead into the water. The City of Decatur also adds a small amount of phosphate to make the protective layer stronger. 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. Property owners are encouraged to replace lead water service lines and older plumbing fixtures that may still contain lead.

How can I test my water for lead?

While the Village of Mt. Zion does not perform testing for lead, you can send a sample of your water to a certified laboratory to be tested for a fee. The two certified laboratories closest to Mt. Zion are:

Illinois EPA Laboratory
825 North Rutledge
Springfield, IL
(217) 782-9780
tom.weiss@illinois.gov

PDC Laboratories, Inc.
1210 Capitol Airport Drive
Springfield, IL
(217) 753-1148
jsolomon@pdclab.com

For more information

Call Mt. Zion Village Hall at 217-864-5424.

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.