

Establishing Routine Practices

There are several quick, easy, and affordable ways to help protect your students from the risks of lead in drinking water and improve overall water quality.

The longer water sits in lead-based pipes, or copper soldered pipes overnight or over weekends, the higher the chance that the water becomes contaminated by lead leaching in from the surrounding pipe. Schools and daycares have an elevated risk of lead in drinking water due to the irregular, on and off again, water use patterns.

Children 6 and younger are most vulnerable to the effects of lead. When they are exposed to high levels of lead, it can lead to damage to the brain, nervous system, blood, and kidneys. Even low levels of exposure can impact IQ, damage hearing, reduce attention span, and lead to poor classroom behavior and performance.



Regular testing can help to identify outlets vulnerable to lead build-up. Knowing which outlets have the potential for lead can help implement a management plan to keep your students safe. Aside from routine testing, there are other practices that should become a habit and further protect the children in your care.

Cleaning

Regular cleaning of water fountains and sink faucets can keep the water clear of debris and build-up. Keep faucet aerators and screens clear by cleaning them regularly.

Establish a cleaning schedule and record cleaning times on a chart near the outlet. Setting a timer or scheduling cleanings ahead of time can keep everyone on track.

Point of use filters

Point of use filters attach to the outlet and help filter the water as it leaves the pipes. If you have a point-of-use filter, clean it regularly and change the filter when necessary. Set reminders and schedule maintenance to always ensure clean water.

Verify that the filter on the outlet is certified to remove lead. The filter should be certified against NSF/ANSI Standard 53; this ensures it is designed for lead removal. Filters certified against NSF/ANSI Standard 42 will also catch particulate lead. Look for the filter's certification on the manufacturer's website.

Temperature

When preparing food, use cold water from the tap. Warm water can soften lead pipes and lead to higher levels of lead. When hot water is needed for cooking, fill a pot or cup with cold water and heat it on the stovetop or microwave.

Post signs around cooking facilities to remind visitors and staff to use the cold water when cooking.

Communication

Clearly communicate policies and expectations. Students, faculty, staff, and visitors should all be able to read or follow posted instructions. Be specific and clear with the signage. "Do not Drink" and "For Handwashing Only" convey different messages, and each message might work in different locations.

When small children or multiple language speakers are present, consider using pictures to convey a message.

Routine flushing

Flushing sitting water from the pipes in locations where students might get drinking water is a fast and easy way to protect them from lead. Flush times change depending on the type of outlet, so following a flush chart and receiving proper training in lead prevention is important. Flush chart picture



Flushing might not always be effective, so follow-up testing is needed to make sure the flush is enough to purge the pipes of lead-contaminated water. Some lines might need to be flushed before every use. If follow-up testing shows this is the case, use signage posted at the faucet or outlet to tell any users to flush for 30 seconds before drinking.

Flushing Mondays is an easy way to make it a habit. Find the furthest outlet away from the service line and let it run for 10 minutes. Turn on all outlets where drinking water might be accessed and let the water run for 30 seconds to one minute. Do the same in any kitchen or food prep areas. This will purge any sitting water in the lines and introduce fresh water in its place.

Flushing is also necessary after routine maintenance, including pipe repairs, faucet or filter installation, and cleaning measures. The goal is to ensure that the pipes contain fresh, clean water at all times when people are present and may drink from them.

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Flushing Directions by Outlet Type		
Image	Description	Flush Time
	Faucet furthest away from service line on each wing and floor	10 min
	Drinking water fountains without refrigeration units	1 min
	Water fountains with refrigeration*	15 min
	Kitchen faucets or others used for drinking and/or cooking	1 min