



Lead in Your School's Drinking Water

Top 5 FAQ

1. How does lead get into drinking water?

- a. Water coming from the service provider is clean. Water becomes contaminated when corroding lead-based pipes leach particles into water that sits in the pipes over long weekends or holidays. Copper pipes installed prior to 1986 used lead soldering that can leach into drinking water. Faucets or fixtures may also contain lead components that can leach lead into drinking water.

2. Are schools and childcare facilities required to test for lead in their drinking water?

- a. As of January 2022, schools and daycares are not required to test for lead in their drinking water in South Carolina. SCDHEC requires that public water providers test for lead in their lines, but this does not guarantee lead-free drinking water as it can leach in from pipes, faucets, fixtures, and solder. There is no safe level of lead in drinking water; however, so regular testing is recommended as a step to keep students safe.

3. What can schools and childcare facilities do if they find lead?

- a. The EPA's 3T's - Training, Testing, and Taking Action - provides action items and solutions should your school test positive for lead. Shutting off problem outlets, routine flushing, installing filters, cooking with cold water, and using signage to indicate places that are safe for drinking water are immediate and short-term management techniques that can be used while a remediation plan is put in place.

4. Is flushing a long-term solution?

- a. Flushing problem outlets can be a short-term solution when coupled with regular testing. When included with other management techniques, flushing can be a valuable tool in long-term management. If testing after flushing shows a reduction or elimination of lead levels, use signage to instruct teachers and students to flush for 30 seconds before each use. Long term solutions can be found on EPA's 3T's Module 6 – Establishing Routine Practices

5. Are children more susceptible to lead than adults?

- a. According to the CDC, children 6 and younger are most vulnerable to the effects of lead. When they are exposed to high levels of lead, it can damage 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.