

The VBCPS Water Testing Program



Frequently Asked Questions

What is lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning occurs when a person's health or body functions are negatively affected by lead contamination in what they eat, drink, touch or breathe. There are many factors that affect how human bodies handle exposure to lead. These factors include a person's age, nutritional status, and genetic makeup, as well as the source of lead and length of their exposure.

Who is at greatest risk?

Children under age six are most susceptible since their brain is still developing. During this time, low levels of lead can interfere with normal brain development, resulting in behavioral problems and permanently reduced IQ. This is also the age during which hand-to-mouth activity is a child's way of exploring, and they spend more time crawling on the floor where they can pick up dust containing lead on their hands.

How do children get lead poisoning?

Most children get lead poisoning from paint in homes built before 1978. When old paint cracks and peels, it makes dangerous dust. The dust is so small you cannot see it. Most children get lead poisoning when they breathe or swallow the dust on their hands and toys.

Reducing Possible Lead Exposure from Drinking Water

Flush pipes



- Lead enters water when it sits in plumbing for an extended period of time.
- Run the water for 30 seconds anytime water hasn't been used for several hours.

Use Cold Water



- Always use cold tap water for drinking or cooking. Hot water dissolves lead in pipes more quickly.

Drinking water is not a major source for lead exposure. It is estimated that drinking water only contributes 10-20% of total lead exposure.

Paint is the most common and the most dangerous form of lead exposure.

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Initial testing for lead and mitigation completed on all buildings built on or before 1986.

After the 1986 Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments, only lead-free solder (<0.2%) has been used in drinking water plumbing. Therefore, the risk of exposure to lead in drinking water within newer school buildings is likely to be even lower than in pre-1986 facilities where water sources were tested.

VBCPS will test consumable water sources every five years at all VBCPS facilities built before 2014.

The Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act became effective in 2014. Therefore, no lead sources are present in the newest VBCPS buildings.

In pre-2014 facilities, “Water not for Drinking or Cooking” signs are posted over water sources not intended for consumption, such as bathrooms, showers, and science labs.

This does not mean that the water is untreated, it just means that water from that source is not intended for drinking or food preparation.



HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM LEAD EXPOSURE

✓ **In homes or buildings built before 1978, assume that the paint contains lead unless tests show otherwise.**

- Know the age of your home and any other houses or buildings your child spends a lot of time in.
- If the home is under renovation or in need of repair, cracking or peeling paint could create dangerous dust.
- Regularly wash children’s hands and toys to remove contamination from lead in household dust or soil.
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- Take off shoes when entering the house to prevent bringing in lead contaminated soil from outside.

✓ **Make sure your children eat nutritious meals high in iron and calcium**

- ✓ **Avoid using imported containers, cookware, pottery, teapots, or tableware to store or cook foods or liquids.**
- ✓ **Shower and change clothes after finishing a task that involves working with lead-based products. Bathing and washing hands will not expose you to lead from water, as lead is not absorbed through the skin.**
- ✓ **Check the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for recalled toys.**