

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the potential health effects of lead and how you can have your child's blood tested, please contact either:

- Wisconsin Division of Public Health
(608) 266-1251
- Public Health Madison & Dane County
(608) 266-4821

To have the water tested at your home, you may contact one of the following certified laboratories in the area:

- Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
(800) 442-4618
- Northern Lake Service, Inc
(715) 478-2777

The National Lead Information Center can answer your questions and send you more general information regarding lead and lead hazards. They can be contacted by calling (800) 424-LEAD(5323).

To learn more about reducing lead exposure around your home or business, please visit the EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead.

To view Stoughton's most recent Water Quality Report, please visit ccr.stoughtonutilities.com.

Lead Awareness

Important Information About Lead and Your Drinking Water



600 South Fourth Street
Stoughton, WI 53589
(608) 873-3379

www.stoughtonutilities.com

LEAD IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Lead is a naturally occurring metal that can be toxic to humans and animals if ingested. It can be found in the air, soil, water, and inside of our homes. Lead has been used in many products found around the home in the form of paint, ceramics, plumbing materials, gasoline, batteries, and cosmetics. When lead is released into the air, it can travel long distances before settling to the ground.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD EXPOSURE

Lead can be especially dangerous to children because their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the effects of lead, and their bodies absorb more lead than adults as they grow. Pregnant women should take extra precautions against lead exposure due to the potential effects to their developing baby. Lead is also stored in the bones and can be released later in life.

Even low levels of lead in children can result in behavioral and learning problems, lower IQ, hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, and anemia.

Adults exposed to lead can suffer from increased blood pressure, hypertension, decreased kidney function, and reproductive problems.

Higher levels of lead in the blood can lead to more serious health problems including seizures, coma, and death.

LEAD AND DRINKING WATER

Although the majority of lead exposure comes from sources around the home and in the environment, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that between 10 - 20% of lead exposure comes from drinking water.

Stoughton's water does not have lead present when it leaves our wells, but can be contaminated as it travels through lead service pipes that have started to corrode over time.

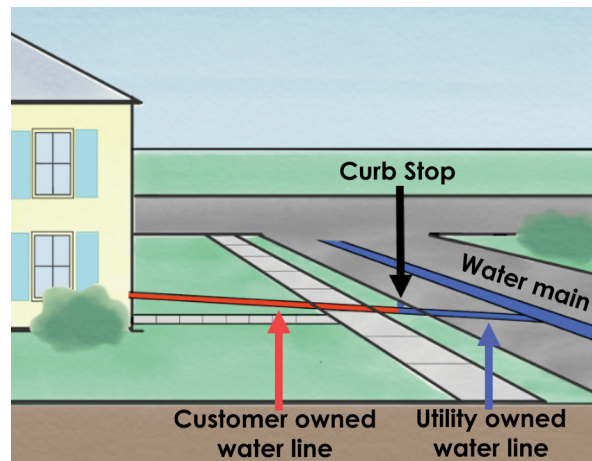
There are a number of factors that can contribute to the amount of lead that enters your drinking water, including the corrosivity of the water, the temperature of the water as it passes through the pipes, and the length of time the water stays in the pipes. Hot water and water that has been sitting in the pipes for long periods of time are more likely to pick up contaminants from the pipes and fixtures.

The Safe Drinking Water Act is a federal law that was first passed in 1974 to regulate public drinking water. The law gives the EPA the authority to set quality standards for drinking water, which are then enforced by state agencies. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires that all public water systems test their drinking water yearly to ensure that contaminant levels remain below the thresholds set by the EPA. The results of these tests are published on our website, and Stoughton's drinking water continually meets and exceeds all state and federal water quality standards.

WHAT STOUGHTON UTILITIES IS DOING

Stoughton Utilities tests the drinking water each year for contaminants, including lead, to ensure that your drinking water continues to be safe to drink. The results from these tests are published yearly in a Consumer Confidence Report. For more information about Stoughton's water quality and to view the Consumer Confidence Report, please visit our website at www.stoughtonutilities.com.

Each year, Stoughton Utilities works to replace some of the water service lines throughout the city that have lead service laterals. When Stoughton Utilities is replacing underground infrastructure in your area, you may be notified by letter to encourage you to replace your privately owned portion of the water service line at the same time. Your costs will generally be lower if you choose to replace your water service line at the same time.



The picture above illustrates what portions of the water service lines are privately owned, and what portions are owned by Stoughton Utilities.

WATER SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT

Lead pipes were used in Stoughton for private water service lines through the 1950's. Homes constructed after 1960 are unlikely to have lead water service lines.

If you determine that your home has a lead water service line, the best way to ensure that you continue to have safe drinking water is to replace the privately-owned portion of the line with copper, iron, or plastic pipe. Stoughton Utilities will replace the publicly-owned portion at the same time.

The privately-owned portion of the service line is everything located after the curb stop, usually in the park row. Replacement of the water service line will be done at the homeowners expense, and costs on average \$3,000 - \$5,000. You should contact a licensed plumber to obtain a quote for your property.

INSIDE YOUR HOME

In 1986, congress restricted the amount of lead allowed in plumbing materials, so homes that were built before that are more likely to have plumbing components that contain high levels of lead, such as pipes, solder, and fixtures.

An amendment to the Safe Drinking Water Act updated the definition of "lead free" and reduced the amount of lead allowed in fixtures produced after 2013. Plumbing fixtures produced before that may contain higher levels of lead.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can easily determine if your water service line is lead by inspecting the water line entering your home from the street, usually located in the basement.

Using a key or coin, carefully scratch the water pipe entering your home, prior to the water meter. If the scratch turns a shiny silver color, the pipe could be made of lead or steel. Try placing a strong kitchen magnet on the water line entering your home to determine if it is magnetic. Magnets will not stick to lead.

If you're still unsure if your home has a lead service line, you should contact a plumber to have your water lines and fixtures inspected for lead.

If you determine that your home has a lead service line, you can have the water tested at your expense to determine if lead is contaminating your drinking water. The following is a list of state approved laboratories in our area that can test your drinking water for lead:

Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
(800) 442-4618

Northern Lake Service, Inc.
(715) 478-2777

If there are children in the home, you may want to have their doctor test their blood for lead. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that action be taken when the level of lead in the child's blood exceeds 5 micrograms per deciliter.

TIPS

If a water test indicates that the drinking water in your home exceeds 15 parts per billion of lead and replacement of your privately-owned service line is not an option at this time, you can take the following precautions to protect your family:

- Let the cold water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water has gone unused for more than 4 hours.

- Do not drink or cook with hot tap water. Hot water can dissolve lead more quickly than cold water.

- Clean your faucet aerators on a regular basis to remove any accumulation of particles that could contaminate your drinking water.

- Purchase a home filtration system to filter your water before drinking or cooking with it. Filtration systems must be certified to ensure that they will remove lead from the water. Visit www.nsf.org for more information.

- Replace older plumbing fixtures with "lead-free" fixtures manufactured after 2013.

- Eat a healthy diet. Foods rich in iron help to protect the body from the harmful effects of lead, while foods rich in calcium and vitamin C help to reduce lead absorption.