

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT  
ONE MUNICIPAL PLAZA  
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## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER**

### **March 2019**

The Bloomfield 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 young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

The Bloomfield water quality sampling results may be viewed at:

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/waterwatch>. Please type in “Bloomfield Water Department: in the water system search window.

Or on the Township’s website at <https://www.bloomfieldwpnj.com/DocumentCenter/View/1351/Bloomfield-Lead-Sampling-Results---July-to-December-2018-PDF>.

Bloomfield will continue to sample for lead for the monitoring period from January to June of 2019. These results will be posted after June 30, 2019 once all results are returned and additional information will be provided.

The 90th percentile value for our water system was 20 parts per billion which is greater than the lead action level of 15 parts per billion.

The Township of Bloomfield presently purchases water from the City of Newark’s Pequannock Water Treatment Facility. Bloomfield does not treat its water but receives it fully treated from the City of Newark. Based upon information from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Newark’s corrosion control treatment is currently ineffective which leads to elevated levels of lead in homes that have lead piping or plumbing. Those homes which do not have lead-containing materials should not experience elevated levels of lead from the water supply.

The City of Newark is presently working with the NJDEP to improve their treatment process and reduce the corrosiveness of their 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 is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies.

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials

containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome-brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect houses and buildings to water mains (service lines).

New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free”, may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 0.25 percent lead to be labeled as “lead free”. However, prior to January 4, 2014, “lead free” allowed up to 8 percent lead content of the wetted surfaces of plumbing products including those labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

EPA estimates that up to 20 percent of a person’s potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

When water stands in Lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon if the water has not been used all day, can contain fairly high levels of lead.

### **Steps you can take to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water**

**1. Run the water to flush out lead.** Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in a faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer the water resides in plumbing the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap means running the cold-water faucet for about 15-30 seconds. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of the plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your health. It usually uses less than one gallon of water.

Regarding flushing of water, for those with known lead service lines, lead interior plumbing materials, or those customers with sample results greater than 15 parts per billion, the following should strongly be considered:

- **Flushing may not reduce lead levels in drinking water from those with lead service lines or unknown service lines.** Those customers should consider using bottled water or a point of use (POU) water filter that is certified by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) International to reduce lead until further notice. The Township of Bloomfield is currently providing such filters to residents free of charge. However, the Township has sampled water from taps that have been run for several minutes and found that the vast majority of lead levels do drop below 15 ppb, but there is no safe level of lead in drinking water.

- **Flushing remains an effective means of reducing exposure for those without lead service lines or plumbing.**

2. Prior to the POU filters being installed, for those with known or unknown lead service lines, the New Jersey Department of Health recommends that bottled water be used for infants who are being fed with formula, and for all children under the age of six. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula. Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and then heat it. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.

**3. Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.**

**4. Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** The Township of Bloomfield is presently providing water filters at no cost for any resident who provides a lead sample to the Health Department. You can sign up for this program by contacting the Bloomfield Health Department at 973-680-4024. You will be provided with a lead sample test kit and be signed up for a free water filter.

If you do not wish to participate in this program, you may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 1-800-NSF-8010 or [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer.

**5. Get your child tested.** Note that the New Jersey Department of Health recommends that children under the age of six have their blood lead levels screened as soon as possible regardless of previous blood lead testing history by their primary health care provider and include information on how testing can be done for free by the local health

department for those without insurance. Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about lead exposure. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead.

Based upon extensive sampling and testing, the presence of lead is not within the Bloomfield water supply, but is a result of lead service lines which connect a building or structure to the Township's water system. Lead can also get into your water supply if your home's plumbing contains old lead pipes and/or copper piping that uses lead soldering. Older water fixtures on sinks can also contain lead which can be absorbed into the water.

In 2019 Bloomfield Water Department is implementing a plan to replace all known lead service lines, when discovered, from the street to the building. This will eliminate the potential for lead to be absorbed into your water supply. To date the Township has replaced over twenty lead service lines and has checked approximately seventy-five suspected locations. In 2019, the Township will continue to check and replace lead service lines. A program is currently planned by the Township to remove over fifty known, lead service lines.

For more information, call us at 973-680-4009 or via e-mail at [engineering@bloomfieldwpnj.com](mailto:engineering@bloomfieldwpnj.com). For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at, <http://www.epa.gov/lead> call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD or Safe Drinking Water Act hotline at 1-800-426-4791, or contact your health care provider.

**6. Test your water for lead.** Call us at 973-680-4009 to find out how to get your water tested for lead. The Bloomfield Health Department will sample your water at no cost and provide you with a free water filter. Contact us at 973-680-4009 to obtain a translated copy of the public education materials or to request assistance in the appropriate language.

This notice is being sent to you by the Bloomfield Water Department, 1 Municipal Plaza, Bloomfield, NJ 07003; New Jersey Public Water Supply (NJPWS) Identification Number NJ0702001.