

## LEAD IN DRINKING WATER – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Answers to most questions can be found at [www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts](http://www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts), including a 60 second PSA video on lead in drinking water.

### Is the water unsafe to drink because of lead?

- The safety of our water for consumption and use is PWSA's number one priority.
- There is no detectable lead in PWSA's drinking water when it leaves the treatment plant and travels through the distribution system.
- PWSA water mains in the street are NOT LEAD.
- Lead can be found in old service lines that travel from the water main to your property, and in older household plumbing.
- PWSA adds chemicals at the treatment plant to help minimize lead corrosion. PWSA cannot completely eliminate the corrosion of lead from old service lines into water.

### How does lead get into drinking water?

Lead enters drinking water mainly through corrosion in:

- partial or full lead service lines (that connect some properties to the water mains)
- interior lead pipe
- interior galvanized pipe (especially if there was, or is, a full or partial lead service line)
- interior copper pipe with lead soldered joints (installed prior to 1988)
- interior plumbing fixtures (purchased or installed prior to January 2014 before the effective date of new definition of "lead-free")

***Not all PWSA customers have lead service lines. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures and solder, but newer homes may also be at risk.***

### What can I do NOW?

If you know or suspect that you have lead service lines or plumbing, there are ways to reduce your exposure to lead in your drinking water:

- **Run your water to flush out lead:** If your water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold.
- **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.**
- **Do not boil water to remove lead.**
- **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water:** this includes National Science Foundation (NSF) approved water filters. You can find out more about these at [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org)
- **Determine if you have lead pipes:** *A detailed graphic on how customers can determine if they have lead lines can be found at: [www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts](http://www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts).*
- **Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.** There are lead check swabs that can detect lead on plumbing surfaces such as solder and pipes. These swabs can be purchased at plumbing and home improvement stores. Consider having lead-containing pipes and fixtures replaced, or use the precautions listed above.



## What else is being done?

PWSA adds chemicals at the treatment plant to help to address the corrosion problem. PWSA is applying the optimal corrosion control available for our existing water system. A study is underway to determine if there are additional steps we can take to further reduce corrosion from lead pipes. PWSA will also continue to:

- Test tap water for lead. If customers are concerned that their property may have lead service lines or lead plumbing materials, PWSA will work with them to detect the problem by sending a free lead test kit.  
***If the customer wants to order a lead test kit –direct them to call PWSA Customer Service at 412-255-2423.***
  - The kit will be mailed directly to the customer.
  - Customers will then mail samples back to PWSA’s contracted lab technicians in a prepaid envelope for testing.
  - A letter with results will be mailed to customers in 8-10 business days.
- Educate customers about lead through distribution of public education brochures and posters through the City of Pittsburgh, regularly updating the website at [www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts](http://www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts), local community meetings, and social media outreach.
- Continue to replace any lead service lines they own. PWSA is removing lead service lines from our system, and has for the past 60 years.
- PWSA treats its water with anti-corrosive chemicals to protect customers with lead service lines and plumbing.
- **If customers decide to replace lead service lines, they should contact PWSA at 412-255-2423 for information about coordinating efforts to have PWSA replace their side at the same time, if necessary.**

## Where can I get more information on lead in water?

- All pertinent information and links can be found on the homepage on the right hand side of [www.pgh2o.com](http://www.pgh2o.com) and at [www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts](http://www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts).



- Visit the Allegheny County Health Department’s website at [www.achd.net/lead](http://www.achd.net/lead)
- Visit EPA’s website at: [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)
- Visit DEP’s website at: [www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/My-Water/PublicDrinkingWater/Pages/Lead-in-Drinking-Water.aspx](http://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/My-Water/PublicDrinkingWater/Pages/Lead-in-Drinking-Water.aspx)
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control’s website at: [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm)
- Call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD, or
- Contact your health care provider.

For more information, contact PWSA Communications Manager Will Pickering at 412.255.2099