Village of Scotia – Public Education Notice

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

The Village of Scotia found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. Please read this notice closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

This notice is brought to you by the Village of Scotia.
State Water System ID# NY4600071
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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 primary source of lead exposure for most children is lead-based paint. Other sources of lead exposure include lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place (jobs that include house painting, plumbing, renovation, construction, auto repair, welding, electronics repair, jewelry or pottery repair) and exposure from certain hobbies (such as stained glass or pottery, fishing, making or shooting firearms and collecting lead or pewter figurines), as lead can be carried on clothing and shoes. Children's hands or their toys can come into contact with lead in paint, dust and soil. Therefore, washing children's hands and their toys will help reduce the potential for lead exposure from these sources.

Plumbing materials, including pipes, new brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows pipes, fittings, and fixtures with up to 0.25 percent weighted average of lead to be identified as "lead-free."

The source water from the Great Flats Aquifer which is sometimes referred to as the Schenectady Aquifer does not contain lead. When water is in contact with pipes [or service lines] or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water.

Steps You Can Take To Reduce Your Exposure To Lead In Your Water

1. ***Run your water to flush out lead.*** Run water for 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.

2. ***Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.*** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. 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. ***Replace your plumbing fixtures if they are found to contain lead.*** Plumbing materials including brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law previously allowed end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free." As of January 4, 2014, end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, fittings and valves, must meet the new "lead-free" definition of having no more than 0.25 percent lead on a weighted average. Visit the National Sanitation Foundation website at: **http://www.nsf.org/newsroom_pdf/Lead_free_certification_marks.pdf** to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures and how to identify lead-free certification marks on new fixtures.
5. ***Use bottled water or use a water filter.*** If your home is served by a lead service line, and/or if lead containing plumbing materials are found to be in your home, you may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or visit **http://www.nsf.org/consumer-resources/what-is-nsf-certification/faucets-plumbing-certification/lead-older-homes**, for a consumer guide of approved water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality. Any measure you take to reduce your exposure to lead should be continued until the lead source(s) has been minimized or eliminated.

Should you test your water for lead?

If lead-containing plumbing materials are identified in your home, you may want to consider testing your water for lead to determine how much lead is in your drinking water. If your home meets certain requirements you may qualify to have your home included in our lead sampling plan. If qualified and chosen to become part of the sampling plan, it requires a sample to be taken from the cold tap after no water use for 6 hours. Samples are taken by homeowners with the sample bottles that are dropped off and then picked up by the Department of Public Works during normal operating hours of 7:00 am - 3:30 pm, Monday - Friday. Call us at (518)393-2159 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.

Should your child be tested for lead?

New York Public Health Law requires primary health care providers to screen each child for blood lead levels at one and two years of age as part of routine well-child care. In addition, at each routine well-child visit, or at least annually if a child has not had routine well-child visits, primary health care providers assess each child who is at least six-months of age, but under six years of age, for high lead exposure. Each child found to be at risk for high lead exposure is screened or referred for lead screening.

If your child has not had routine well-child visits (since the age of one year) and you are concerned about lead exposure to your child, contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead.

What Happened? What is Being Done?

The Village of Scotia discovered elevated levels of lead through routine testing in some homes. Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. Lead can be released into water from plumbing materials that contain lead. Common sources include lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures, as well as galvanized pipes, brass or chrome-plated fixtures containing lead, and lead solder connecting copper piping. When present, a lead service line can be the biggest contributor of lead in drinking water. A water service line is the pipe that delivers water to your home from the water main in the street. If it's made of lead or galvanized material, the service line can leach or unpredictably release toxic lead particles into the water as it travels to your home.

The chemistry of drinking water can cause lead and copper to leach from plumbing materials. The Village of Scotia will be completing a Corrosion Control Study. This will help determine how the water can be treated to reduce its corrosivity. We will look at all options available for effectiveness, but also cost and ease of operation and maintenance. We will return to standard Lead and Copper Monitoring, collecting tap water samples from 60 sampling sites in the distribution system, every 6 months and continue water quality parameter monitoring throughout the distribution system and entry points, along with lead and copper sampling at each entry point to the distribution system.

Your water service line could be made of three different materials depending on the age of your plumbing: lead, copper, galvanized steel. To determine what your water service line is made of, use the flat edge of a screwdriver or coin to scratch the pipe. If your service line is made of lead, the scratched area will appear shiny and silver. If your service line is made of copper, the scratched area will have the same color as a penny. If your service line is made of galvanized steel, the scratched area will have a dull gray color with no noticeable scratch on the surface. Water service lines from the Village water main to the building being served, including service curb stops are owned and serviced by the homeowner.

If your home meets certain requirements you may qualify to have your home included in our lead sampling plan. If qualified and chosen to become part of the sampling plan, it requires a sample to be taken from the cold tap after no water use for 6 hours. Samples are taken by homeowners with the sample bottles that are dropped off and then picked up by the Department of Public Works. Please call (518)393-2159 or visit www.villageofscotia.org to see if you qualify.

For More Information

*Call us at (518)393-2159 or visit our website at **www.villageofscotia.org**. For more information on lead in drinking water, contact the Schenectady County Environmental Health Department at (518)386-2818 or visit **www.schenectadycounty.com/env-health**, or the New York State Department of Health directly by calling the toll-free number (within New York State) 1-800-458-1158, extension 27650, or out of state at (518) 402-7650, or by email at bpwsp@health.state.ny.us. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at **www.epa.gov/lead**, or call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD.*