

The Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health & the Environment

A Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit

Affiliated with the George Washington University School of Public Health & Health Services
and the

Children's National Medical Center

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LEAD IN WATER IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

This is our understanding of the current situation regarding lead in water in the District of Columbia. There are about 130,000 homes in Washington that get their water from the Water and Sewer Authority (WASA). About 23,000 of those homes have lead pipes that connect the home to the water main in the street. Only those homes are at risk of having lead in their water.

We recommend the following:

1. Contact WASA ((202) 787-2732 or WQP2003@dcwasa.com) to determine if you have a lead service line. If you do not, you need not worry further.
2. If you have a lead service line, WASA can provide you with a kit to collect your water to determine if it contains amounts of lead that might be hazardous. These kits are also available on-line and in some home stores. Look for a kit provided by a company that uses an EPA-certified laboratory. A list of EPA Certified laboratories is available at <http://www.dhmd.state.md.us/labs/pdf/watercert/certlist-11-30-2003.PDF> or <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/dw/files/lablist.pdf>
3. If the level of lead in your water is below 15 parts per billion, there is very little likelihood of a problem developing from drinking the water.
4. We would only advise blood lead tests for children under 6, and only under the following circumstances
 - a. If the level of lead in your water is over 100 parts per billion, and you live in a house built before 1950, and your child has a developmental or neurological problem; or
 - b. If the level of lead in your water is over 300 parts per billion
5. If you are in one of these situations, please call the office to schedule an appointment for a lead test.
6. Do not use tap water to make infant formula until you know that you do not have a lead service line or you know that the amount of lead in your water is less than 15 parts per billion.
7. Pregnant women and breast feeding mothers should not drink the tap water until they know that they do not have a lead service line or that the water at their tap is less than 15 parts per billion
7. If the level of lead in your water is above 15 parts per billion, do not drink the water unless it has been filtered through a filter that is certified to remove lead by NSF International. (www.nsfconsumer.org/water/drinking_water.asp) Additional information about water filters was printed in the January 2003 edition of *Consumers Reports*.
8. Additional information about lead in water is available at the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment. They can be reached at 202-994-1166 or their web site www.health-e-kids.org