



17 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148
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February 1, 2017

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO RESIDENTS REGARDING POTENTIAL FOR ELEVATED LEAD LEVELS IN DRINKING WATER

The Malden Water Department wants all consumers to be aware of the potential for elevated lead levels in drinking water, the causes, the health effects, and what can be done to reduce or eliminate the effects or the source.

Every six months, the Malden Water Department works with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) to test water for lead levels at 15 sites that are likely to have lead components. For the test period ending December 31, 2016, two of the sites did result in elevated levels of lead which put Malden in the 87% percentile rather than the acceptable 90%. The result was 30.9 ppb (parts per billion) which is above the Action Level of 15ppb. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read the following information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking 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. Additionally, lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child can receive lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

Sources of Lead:

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Sources of exposure are lead-based paint, household dust, soil, and some plumbing materials, including certain types of faucets. It is important to understand that the water source (MWRA reservoirs) and the water mains that distribute your water are lead-free. However, lead can get into tap water through a lead service line (the pipe that connects your home to the main in the street), lead solder typically used in plumbing prior to 1986, and some brass fixtures. The corrosion or wearing away of these lead-based materials can add lead to your tap water, particularly if water sits for a long time in the pipes before use.

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How to Reduce Lead Exposure:

- If your water has gone unused for more than 6 hours, run any faucet used for drinking or cooking until it is consistently cold (usually about 30 seconds to 2 minutes) before drinking or cooking with it. The flushing of your tap ensures the best quality water.
- Use **only** cold water for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula/food for infants.
- Please note that boiling water does not eliminate lead. If there is lead in your water, boiling it will increase lead levels.
- Other steps that may be taken include installing water filters that meet the standard for effective lead reduction, identify if your plumbing fixtures or water piping contain lead and replacing them, and having your water tested.
- The Water Department will provide free testing of water for any homeowner or tenant as well as an inspection of water service to determine material. For further information call 781-397-7040 or email leadinfo@cityofmalden.org.
- It is also suggested that parents have their child's blood tested for lead through their health care provider or the Malden Board of Health at 781-397-7052.

Again, elevated levels of lead in drinking water will occur if your property has lead water pipes or components that contain lead, typically installed prior to 1986. Presently, Malden has approximately 3,000 lead water pipes out of 12,000 delivering water to properties. The City will be developing a program for the replacement of the lead water pipes in the street and will work with property owners to determine if a lead water line is present on private property and the best way to replace it.

For more information, call us at 781-397-7040, email at leadinfo@cityofmalden.org or visit our website at www.cityofmalden.org/lead.

For further information on reducing lead exposure in your home/building and on the health effects of lead, visit the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your healthcare provider.

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