

FACT SHEET

LEAD IN NEWARK'S DRINKING WATER: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESIDENTS

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The amount of lead in drinking water in Newark, New Jersey is a threat to the city's residents. After long delay—and under pressure of litigation—Newark officials finally acknowledged the City's public health crisis and announced plans to provide filters to some residents. But many questions remain unanswered.

LEAD IN NEWARK'S WATER

Levels of the toxic metal in Newark's water are some of the highest recently recorded by a large water system in the country. For at least the last two years, the amount of lead in Newark's drinking water has far exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency's federal action level of 15 parts per billion. During the most recent six-month monitoring period, completed in December 2018, more than 10 percent of homes sampled reported levels above 47.9 parts per billion, more than three times the federal limit. And lead levels continue to rise in 2019, with individual homes reporting lead in drinking water at levels of 202, 212, 544, and 953 parts per billion. Particularly concerning is that Newark has had the greatest number of lead-poisoned children in New Jersey for years.

HEALTH IMPACTS FROM LEAD EXPOSURE

Lead exposure has serious and irreversible [health impacts](#), like fertility problems, nervous system damage, and cognitive dysfunction, among other issues. Pregnant women and children are particularly vulnerable. There is no safe level of lead exposure.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEWARK RESIDENTS

- 1. Get your tap water tested for lead.** If you live in Newark, request a free test from the Newark Department of Water and Sewer Utilities by calling **973-733-6303** or emailing **waterandsewer@ci.newark.nj.us**.
For independent testing, [Healthy Babies Bright Futures](#) lets you pay what you can afford for the test, or check the [EPA website](#) to find a certified lab.
- 2. Use Only Cold Tap Water for Drinking.** Warm or hot water is more likely to contain elevated levels of lead. Also, don't boil your drinking water—that can concentrate the lead content.
- 3. Choose and Maintain Your Water Filter Carefully.** Install and use water filters certified to remove lead by NSF International or WQA. See [here](#) for a review of how to pick and operate a filter, and [here](#) for a list of filters that reduce lead levels. Also, be sure to change the filter cartridges regularly, in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.
- 4. Maintain Your Faucet Aerators, Too.** Remove and clean individual faucet aerators, as lead particles and sediment can collect in the aerator screen.
- 5. Protect Growing Bodies.** To the extent possible, use only filtered or bottled water to prepare baby formula and food. Children and pregnant or nursing women should also use filtered or bottled water for drinking and cooking. Consider testing kids for lead exposure by a doctor or pediatrician.
- 6. Consider Replacing Your Own Pipes and Fixtures.** If you can afford it, replace any indoor household plumbing that may contain lead. The City has implemented a Lead Service Line Replacement Program that is meant to help homeowners replace their lead service lines at a reduced cost. If the service line bringing water to your home from the street contains lead, contact the City to learn more about their program by emailing **info@newarkleadsservice.com**. The entire length of the lead service line should be removed and replaced together. Replacing only part of it could cause lead levels to increase. For more info, see [here](#).