

# Lead in Parchment Drinking Water

## What is lead?

Lead is a metal that can be found in air, soil, water and inside our homes. Lead is found in many materials we use in our daily lives such as paint, batteries, cosmetics, and plumbing such as pipes and fixtures. Exposure to lead can be harmful to a person's health.

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## How is lead getting in my drinking water?

Homes with known or possible lead service lines that receive water from the City of Parchment may have lead in their water. When the City of Parchment switched to the City of Kalamazoo water, the Parchment distribution system changed water flow direction and flushed the system using high pressure and speed. This can cause coating in the pipes to breakdown. When coating breaks down, lead from the pipes can dissolve into the water.

The Parchment distribution system is working to build the coating back on all pipes. Building the coating requires normal use of water from residents. Continue to run the water in your home as you normally would. It is recommended that homes with known or possible lead service lines, or that have a test result that found lead in the water, use a water filter certified to reduce lead in water for uses when water might be swallowed. For information on how to get a water filter, see "How can I have my water tested and get a water filter?" below.

## How much lead can be in my water?

Small amounts of lead in drinking water can be harmful to a person's health, especially babies and young children. The Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act (MSDWA) includes rules on lead and copper for public water systems. Under these rules, the MSDWA has set an "action level" of 15 parts per billion (ppb) of lead for public water systems. This action level is used for monitoring corrosion. If a public water supply water test finds amounts of lead above 15 ppb, further review is needed.

## How do I know if lead is in my drinking water?

Testing is the only way to know if lead is in your drinking water. Lead has no taste or smell and can not be seen in water. Contact your public water supply to learn more about the water quality. Visit [www.protectyourwater.net](http://www.protectyourwater.net) for more information.

## How can I have my water tested and get a water filter?

Water testing is available to homes who receive water from the City of Parchment. A free water filter certified to reduce lead in water will be provided to homes with a lead service line or homes with test results that found lead in the water. Call the City of Parchment at 269-349-3785 or the City of Kalamazoo at 269-337-8550 to have your water tested and to receive a filter. Questions about installing the filter contact 269-337-8550.

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## What health problems can lead cause?

Lead in drinking water can enter your blood. Children under 6 years old are most at risk of harm to their health. If you are pregnant, lead can harm your unborn baby. Most adults can be exposed to higher amounts of lead than children and experience less or no health problems.

## Babies and Young Children

Lead exposure in babies and young children can cause serious health problems. Some of the health problems may never go away. Lead in a child's body can:

- Slow down growth and development
- Damage hearing and speech
- Make it hard to pay attention and learn

## Pregnant Women and Unborn Babies

Unborn babies build bone from calcium found in their mother's bones. When calcium is released from the mother's bones to her unborn baby, lead stored in her bones is released too. Lead can also cross the placenta.

Lead can:

- Reduce growth of their unborn baby including the brain, kidneys, and nervous system
- Cause premature birth
- Cause a miscarriage

Good nutrition is one way to protect your family from lead. Calcium, iron, and vitamin C can help protect the body from the harmful effects of lead. These nutrients help the body absorb less lead and are part of a healthy diet. Choose a variety of foods daily.

Talk with your doctor if you have concerns about exposure to lead from drinking water or other sources. Your doctor may choose to order a lead blood test. A lead blood test can tell you how much lead may be in your blood. To learn more about health problems linked to lead visit <https://www.epa.gov/lead/learn-about-lead>.

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## How can I avoid lead in drinking water?

- **Have your water tested if you are concerned about lead.**
- **Avoid swallowing water with high amounts of lead.**
- **Before drinking or cooking, run your water for four to six minutes to flush your pipes.** Flush your pipes by running your faucets, taking a shower, running a load of laundry, or doing a load of dishes.
- Once you flush your pipes, you can use cold water from your faucet for drinking, cooking, and for rinsing fruits and vegetables. You can also use filtered water or bottled water. Do not use hot water from the tap for these activities.
- Do not heat or boil your water to remove lead. Hot water will increase the amount of lead in the water that remains.
- Use bottled or filtered water for making powdered baby formula. You can also use Ready to Feed (RTF) formula.
- You can shower or bathe with the water. Adults and children should avoid swallowing the water when showering or bathing.
- Once you flush your pipes, you can use cold water from your faucet for brushing teeth. You can also use filtered water or bottled water.
- Use a water filter certified to reduce lead in the water. Look for the certification number, NSF Standard 53, if you're buying a filter. It is important to replace the filter's cartridge as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Clean your faucets' screens on a regular basis.

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## For More Information

**Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**

[www.michigan.gov/lead](http://www.michigan.gov/lead)

**Healthy Homes – Lead Safe**

[www.michigan.gov/leadsafe](http://www.michigan.gov/leadsafe)

**Kalamazoo Health and Community Services Department**

[www.kalcounty.com/hcs](http://www.kalcounty.com/hcs)

**United States Environmental Protection Agency**

[www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)