

## Health Effects of Lead



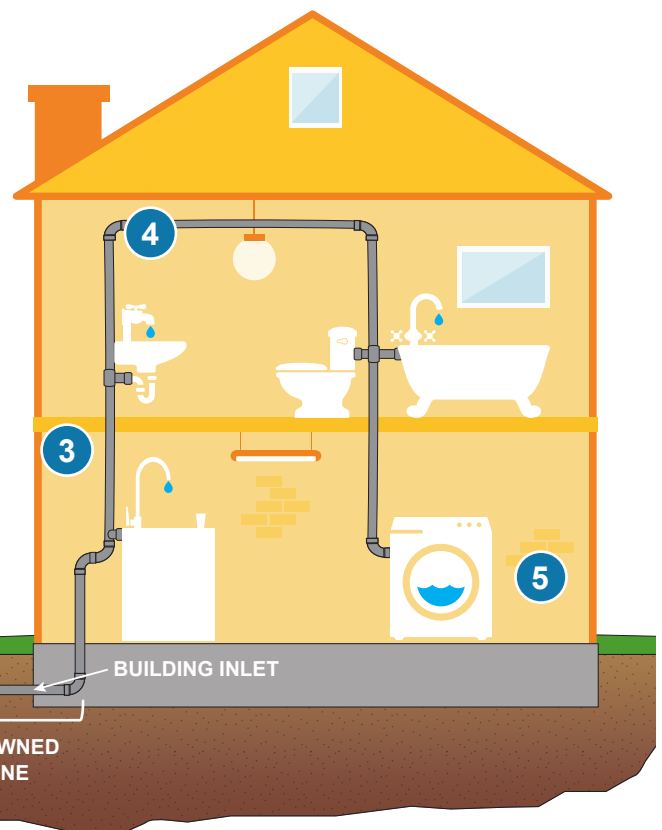
**Exposure to lead can cause serious health effects in all age groups.** Infants and children can have decreased IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can result in new learning and behavior problems or make existing problems worse.

Children of women exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risks. Adults can have higher risks of heart disease, high blood pressure and kidney or nervous system problems.

## Sources of Lead in the Home

**Lead is a naturally occurring material that was used for many years in residential and industrial plumbing products.** Historically, lead was considered a good material for plumbing because it could be easily formed into different shapes and resist leaks. For this reason, older homes may have service lines, plumbing, and kitchen or bath fixtures that contain lead.

- 1 SAWS provides a source of drinking water that is routinely tested to verify it is safe. Additionally, SAWS water mains are not made of lead.
- 2 The water service line consists of a portion owned by the customer and a portion owned by SAWS. Either portion could be made of lead, which could affect water quality inside a home. Since the 1980s, SAWS has proactively replaced older pipes in the public water system that were made of lead.
- 3 Homes may contain lead piping and lead solder, which can also affect drinking water quality.
- 4 Drinking water quality may also be affected at the point of use if your plumbing fixtures and faucets contain lead.
- 5 Other potential sources of lead in a home include lead-based paint, dust, soil, jewelry and some plastics.



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## Steps you can take to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water

- ▶ **Flush your tap for at least 5 minutes** before drinking or cooking if the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than 6 hours (for example, first thing in the morning).
- ▶ **Use cold water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula.** Hot water is more likely to contain lead than cold water.
- ▶ **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water does not remove lead.
- ▶ **Test your water** if you are concerned about lead in your drinking water. Tests should be performed by a state-certified laboratory such as San Antonio Testing Laboratory: [satestinglab.com](http://satestinglab.com).
- ▶ **Filter your water. Use a water filter that is NSF 53 certified for lead removal.** Many filters and filter systems can improve water quality and taste in other ways too. Visit [nsf.org](http://nsf.org) for more information.
- ▶ **Clean faucet aerators and flush cold water taps regularly.** Aerators can collect particles from lead plumbing and should be removed and cleaned regularly. It is especially important after household plumbing work and repairs. After removing the aerator, flush the cold water lines for 5 minutes.
- ▶ **Get your child tested.** Contact your health care provider to find out how you can get your child's blood tested for lead if you are concerned about possible exposure.



## How To Access SAWS' Service Line Inventory

State and federal regulations require water utilities like SAWS to make information about each customer's service line material available to the public. To look up your property's information, visit [saws.org/lead](http://saws.org/lead) and follow the "Service Line Inventory" link.

## Where To Learn More



SAWS works hard to provide a safe source of drinking water to our customers. Because property owners within the SAWS service area own their water service lines, there is a shared responsibility to manage potential lead exposure. We are ready to work with you to answer your questions about water quality and Project Lead.

- **San Antonio Metropolitan Health District**  
Information on health impacts and child blood lead testing: [sanantonio.gov/health](http://sanantonio.gov/health)
- **Texas Commission on Environmental Quality**  
Details about Texas' drinking water lead and copper program: [tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/chemicals/lead\\_copper](http://tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/chemicals/lead_copper)
- **United States Environmental Protection Agency**  
Resources to understand/reduce lead exposure: [epa.gov/lead](http://epa.gov/lead)
- **National Lead Hotline: 1-800-424-LEAD (5323)**

For more information, call us at 210-233-2212 or visit [saws.org/lead](http://saws.org/lead). To learn more about reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at [epa.gov/lead](http://epa.gov/lead) or contact your health care provider.

