

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ELGIN DRINKING WATER

Elgin water system has found levels of lead in drinking water above the federal action level of 15 parts per billion. Eighteen (18) sites exceeded a lead concentration of 15 ppb, resulting in a 90th percentile value of 21 ppb and a lead action level exceedance for the July-December 2022 monitoring period.

Important Information about lead in your drinking water

Recent drinking water quality monitoring conducted by the City of Elgin has found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes and buildings in Elgin. The source of this lead is likely lead service lines leading from the city's municipal water pipes to homes of Elgin residents. Lead is not present in Elgin's source water (wells and river water), nor is lead in Elgin's treated drinking water. Some homes and buildings, however, have water service lines, solder or fixtures made of lead, and lead can enter the drinking water through the corrosion of plumbing materials.

The results from the drinking water monitoring are representative of the homes and buildings most at-risk for lead in water – those built or plumbed before 1988. Lead can enter the drinking water through the corrosion of plumbing materials.

Health effects of lead

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. Lead can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and it 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. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

Sources of lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the workplace and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry.

Lead is not present in Elgin's source water (wells and river water), nor is lead in Elgin's treated drinking water. Some homes and buildings, however, have water service lines, solder or fixtures made of lead, and lead can enter the drinking water through the corrosion of plumbing materials. Homes built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures and solder. However, newer homes may also be at risk because legally "lead free" plumbing, prior to 2014, may contain up to 8% lead. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 0.25% lead to be labeled as "lead free."

Although the primary sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water.

Steps you can take to reduce your exposure to lead in your water

There are easy steps you can take to reduce your exposure to lead in your water:

- **Look for alternative drinking water sources or treatment of water.** The city recommends using a water filter certified to NSF/ASNI standard 42 for particulate reduction in addition to NSF/ANSI 53 for removal of lead if your home contains lead plumbing, particularly for formula-fed infants and vulnerable populations.
- **Run your drinking water faucet to flush out lead.** When your drinking water faucets have not been used for several hours, run the water for at least five minutes before using it for drinking or cooking. This will flush any lead that may be present in the interior plumbing.
- **Use cold water for cooking.**
- **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- **Test your water for lead.** The best way to determine if your water has levels of lead is to get it tested. Visit cityofelgin.org/lead to receive information on how to get your water tested for lead, including information on the city's free lead testing program.
- **Get your child's blood tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.
- **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.**

What Happened? What is Being Done?

Twice a year, Elgin tests 100 homes and buildings that are expected to have lead present in their plumbing due to the presence of lead service lines or expected lead solder based on age of the home. The EPA action level for lead is exceeded when more than 10 percent of these homes have lead-in-water levels above 15 parts per billion. In the first half of 2022, the city completed the routine sampling and of the 100 homes sampled, 8 were found to have lead levels above the action level. In the most recent round of testing, the city has sampled 99 sites, and 18 of the 99 homes tested were above the action level. The city is in the process of obtaining results of the final site sample.

The city's routine water quality sampling under federal and state regulations requires the drinking water from 100 homes to be analyzed every 6 months. When results are above regulation limits, the city is required to notify the public and implement corrective action. The second set of test results from this year indicate eighteen homes are above the regulatory limit of 15 ppb, showing 21 ppb as the 90th percentile value from the set of homes sampled. The tests conducted earlier this year did not exceed regulations

The city is engaged in the following actions to reduce the exposure to lead:

1. For the past 10 years, the city has been replacing the public portion of a lead water service line (water main shut-off valve) when residents commit to replacing their privately owned portion of the lead service line (b-box/shut-off valve to home or building).
2. In 2018, the city created a new program to complete full lead service line replacements at properties impacted by underground construction.

3. The city has committed the majority of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to replace lead water service lines. For Elgin, approximately 13,000 lead service lines will need to be replaced with an estimated cost of at least \$135 million. The \$13.5 million in ARPA funds will assist this effort.
4. The city actively manages drinking water from the water treatment plants and in the water distribution system to maintain the effectiveness of the city's corrosion control treatment.
5. The city is currently conducting a Corrosion Control Study (CCS) to help determine if there are any additional adjustments that the city can make to the water treatment process.

For more information

For more information call us at 311 (or 847-931-6001 if outside of Elgin) or visit our website at cityofelgin.org/lead. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home visit the EPA's website at epa.gov/lead or contact your healthcare provider.

The city has also launched an interactive online dashboard to help educate the public about lead service lines. Residents can search for service line material by address. For more information visit cityofelgin.org/lead.

City of Elgin
IL0894380
December 2022