



# WARREN COUNTY

## WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT

### **LEAD IN DRINKING WATER FACT SHEET** **May 2016 (revised)**

In light of the lead contamination of drinking water in Flint, Michigan and Sebring, Ohio, we have prepared the following information about our water quality and treatment process which prevents lead contamination from becoming an issue in Warren County.

The safety of our drinking water is Warren County Water & Sewer's highest priority. Our drinking water has always met or surpassed all state and federal EPA regulations and industry governed health standards since this department's founding, over 50 years ago. Lead concentrations in both our source water and final production water have always tested significantly lower than the action level concentration set by law at 15 ug/L (micrograms per liter or parts per billion).

Warren County uses quality source waters and a proven treatment process to protect public health. Our water is pumped from wells located in high quality aquifers along or near the Little Miami and Great Miami Rivers. These waters are essentially lead free and very stable. The chemical stability of our source water eliminates the potential for lead leaching into drinking water from the County's waterlines or residential household plumbing. The County utilizes treatment processes that include aeration, dual media filtration, ultraviolet (UV) light, and chlorine and fluoride addition to remove and treat contaminants in the source waters. The stability of our water is maintained throughout our treatment processes.

The majority of the water mains and service lines owned and maintained by the County were installed after 1960, long after the use of lead piping and joints were banned. Many older residential homes in the County, as well as some of the legacy water systems subsequently acquired, were built before the formation of the Water and Sewer Department and may contain lead plumbing. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions Section for more information on determining the potential of lead plumbing in your home.

The County strives to comply with all existing lead in water system regulations, including the Lead and Copper Rule. The US EPA recognized the danger that lead poses in drinking water and in 1991 issued the Lead and Copper Rule which mandates water systems to monitor water quality and limit lead leaching into drinking water. The County has completed all monitoring requirements and all test results indicate below detectable lead concentrations, or very low concentrations, in all previous household samples taken the Warren County water systems.

The Warren County Water & Sewer Department (WCWSD) has reduced the frequency of monitoring to the amount required by EPA: once every three (3) years with a representative number of samples in each system. Drinking water samples are collected in WCWSD customer residences by volunteer request. This is done for each of the six (6) water systems operated by WCWSD. Although, the frequency of the current testing meets state and federal requirement, in efforts to be proactive with water quality and safety, the County is considering increasing our lead and copper monitoring schedule. We will be collecting samples from target areas that include older neighborhoods where household piping and plumbing fixtures are more likely to predate "no-lead" or "lead-free" regulations. Increasing the number of samples taken in each system will help identify any potential problem areas, and help ensure that our entire water system is performing above the State and Federally mandated standards.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

### **Q: How can I tell if my house has Lead water lines?**

**A:** If your house was built prior to 1930 you *may* have lead service lines and or plumbing in your home. You can use a coin or pocket knife to gently scrape the surface of the incoming water pipe where it enters your home. If scraping reveals a bright silvery surface, the lines are likely Lead. Alternatively, you could hire a certified plumbing inspector to test your household plumbing.

### **Q: What factors contribute to lead in my household drinking water?**

**A:** If built prior to 1986, some of the piping, solder or plumbing fixtures in your home *may* contribute or leach low levels of lead and copper into your drinking water. The two most important aspects of lead leaching are: **a)** How long has the water sat unused in the plumbing system? and **b)** Is the water in my lines somewhat corrosive (less stable)? The waters distributed to our customers' taps has been and continues to be very stable (non-corrosive). If you have a home water softening device, overly-softening water *may* change the nature of your drinking water (less stable) and the effects it may have on your plumbing and fixtures. Flushing of drinking water fixtures and lines is the recommended method to reduce levels of any leached contaminants. Letting the cold water faucet run from one (1) up to five (5) minutes prior to first use (after sitting idle for a period of hours) will help ensure your water is fresh and has minimum exposure to piping and plumbing fixtures. Boiling of your water will not remove, but may instead concentrate these metal constituents.

### **Q: I am still concerned and want to get my water tested for lead. How can I accomplish this?**

**A:** There are many certified drinking water laboratories in the State. They would be glad to help you analyze your water for a fee. WCWSD is making a new program available to its customers who want their tap water sampled for lead content. To get your tap water tested for lead, stop by the WCWSD offices at 406 Justice Drive, in Lebanon, Ohio 45036, to purchase a sample kit which includes sample bottle and detailed instructions on how to sample your water. You will need to return the sample bottle to the WCWSD main office as detailed in the instruction letter. The cost for the lead sample kit is \$10 and covers the cost of testing. The lead test results will be sent to you by your preferred method of contact within two business days from when laboratory results are made available to our office.

### **Q: How can I get involved as a volunteer site for the County's lead and copper sampling programs?**

**A:** Any WCWSD customer who would like to see if they qualify to become a volunteer sampling site in our lead and copper testing program, please call or email Jon Collins, Laboratory Supervisor, 513-583-3091 [jon.collins@co.warren.oh.us](mailto:jon.collins@co.warren.oh.us), or John Ware, Superintendent of Water Treatment, 513-683-3687 [john.ware@co.warre.oh.us](mailto:john.ware@co.warre.oh.us), or Dave Walling, Deputy Sanitary Engineer, 513-695-1645, [dave.walling@co.warren.oh.us](mailto:dave.walling@co.warren.oh.us). Helpful information: construction year of your house, do you have a water softener, what type of plumbing do you have in your home, and has there been recent changes to your plumbing.

*Special information regarding pregnant women, infants and young children: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that all exposures to lead should be minimized and that young children, infants and pregnant women should use alternate or filtered water sources when Lead in their household drinking water is greater than 15 ug/L. On March 2, 2016, the OEPA reiterated their concern for potential of elevated levels of lead in blood by consuming drinking water containing lead at any concentration greater than zero (0) ug/L. Alternate water sources (purchased bottled water) or filtered tap water (using an in-home lead filter) should be certified lead-free by the bottled water producer or through appropriate testing of the filtered tap water, thus ensuring the safety of these sources for cooking, drinking, and baby formula preparation.*

### **For more information:**

Ohio EPA: Learn About Lead

<http://epa.ohio.gov/pic/lead.aspx>

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Lead in Drinking Water

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm>