

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
FOR PARENTS, CAREGIVERS & EDUCATORS  
LEAD IN DRINKING WATER OF SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE CENTRES**

**Q. What is lead?**

A. Lead is a soft, heavy metal present in our environment. In the past, lead was used in the manufacturing of many products. Lead exposure has been greatly reduced over the last 40 years due to the removal of lead in paint, gasoline, plumbing products, and more.

**Q. How does lead get into drinking water?**

A. Lead is not natural to Manitoba waters. It is introduced to drinking water through corrosion of lead piping, solder, fixtures, and service lines within older homes and buildings. For this reason, effective monitoring of lead levels requires collecting test samples from drinking water taps.

**Q. What are the possible health impacts of lead in drinking water?**

A. Exposure to lead poses a risk to everyone's health. Infants and children are particularly susceptible to the health effects of lead, and low level lead exposure has been associated with effects on intellectual development and behaviour of children. For this reason, all schools and child care centres are encouraged to test all their drinking water taps to determine if their lead levels meet drinking water standards and, if they do not, take measures to address the problem as soon as possible.

**Q. How do schools and child care centres know if there is lead in their drinking water?**

A. You cannot see, taste, or smell lead in water. Testing at the tap is the only way to find out if there is lead in drinking water. To support schools and child care centres in testing for lead, the Manitoba government established the Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program (2021-2025) which fully funded testing and mitigation activities for schools and licensed child care centres in Manitoba. Ninety-three per cent of eligible schools and child care centres participated in this grant program. For more information, including guidance materials and grant participation information, visit:-

<https://gov.mb.ca/sd/water/drinking-water/lead/>

Home-based child care centres that were not eligible to participate in this program are being prioritized for testing by their water utility under the Residential Lead Monitoring Program. For more information on this program, visit:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/water/drinking-water/lead/residential-lead.html>

**Q. How do I know if the drinking water in my home has lead?**

A. Older homes and dwellings built before 1990 may have lead water fixtures, pipes and service connections. Newer homes (built after 1990) built in older areas may still have lead service lines (pipe delivering water from the main line to your home). For information on testing your drinking water for lead and reducing your family's exposure, visit: [https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/water/drinking\\_water/rld\\_homechildcare.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/water/drinking_water/rld_homechildcare.pdf).

The only way otherwise to know if you have lead in your drinking water is to test for it.

**Q. How can I test for lead in my drinking water?**

A. To effectively test for lead in drinking water, schools, child care centres and larger building facilities are encouraged to develop and maintain a plumbing profile (inventory of all pipes and fixtures) and a sampling plan to ensure all fixtures and faucets used for drinking water or food preparation are tested. A plumbing profile template can be found at

[https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/water/drinking\\_water/fixture\\_inventory\\_form.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/water/drinking_water/fixture_inventory_form.pdf).

Smaller facilities and private homeowners are also encouraged to test for lead at taps used for drinking and food preparation. Before sampling can begin, you must first contact a laboratory capable of lead testing to obtain cost estimates, supplies (e.g. bottles) and sampling guidance. Laboratories in Manitoba that can provide information on testing drinking water for lead include:

ALS Environmental  
1329 Niakwa Road E #12  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 3T4  
Phone: 204-255-9720  
[www.alsglobal.com](http://www.alsglobal.com)

Bureau Veritas  
675 Berry Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 1A7  
Phone: 204-772-7276  
<https://group.bureauveritas.com>

Horizon Lab  
4055 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3K 2E8  
Phone: 204-488-2035  
[www.horizonlab.ca](http://www.horizonlab.ca)

Testmark  
176 Station Rd  
Thompson, MB R8N 0N4  
Phone: 431-725-1513  
<https://testmark.ca/>

Central Testing Laboratory  
Unit 9 – 851 Lagimodiere Blvd.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 3K4  
Phone: 204-237-9128

[www.ctl.mb.ca](http://www.ctl.mb.ca)

Southeast Enviro Testing  
A - 391 Main Street  
Steinbach, Manitoba R5G 1Z4  
Phone: 204-228-9235

[www.southeastenvirotesting.com](http://www.southeastenvirotesting.com)

**Q. If test results show elevated lead levels in drinking water, what actions can I take?**

A. Public health officials recommend corrective actions, like using bottled water or installing a filtration system, to prevent exposure to increased lead in drinking water as soon as possible. Such interim measures should be used to prevent exposure until mitigation work is complete and proven successful (i.e., the source of the lead is removed through plumbing upgrades, such as those noted below, and re-test results are below the lead guideline).

Longer term solutions, or mitigation actions, that can be undertaken to reduce lead in drinking water include replacing water fountains or taps, installing filters or bottle filling stations, reconfiguring the plumbing system, and/or replacing pipes and lead service lines. For guidance on mitigation for schools, child care centres and larger buildings, in particular, visit:

[https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/water/drinking\\_water/corrective\\_actions\\_ccc\\_lgr\\_buildings.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/water/drinking_water/corrective_actions_ccc_lgr_buildings.pdf)

**Q. How do I get more information on lead in drinking water?**

A. For more information on lead in drinking water visit the resources below:

**For health-related questions:**

Visit Manitoba Health's Be Lead Aware website at:

[www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/environmentalhealth/lead/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/environmentalhealth/lead/index.html)

If you have any health questions about lead exposures, you can:

- Contact your local public health office:  
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html>
- Call Health Links–Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll-free)

**For water testing and treatment questions:**

- Visit the Office of Drinking Water's lead in drinking water website at:  
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/water/drinking-water/lead/index.html>
- Call 204-945-5762 OR email at [odw@gov.mb.ca](mailto:odw@gov.mb.ca)