

Important Information about Lead in Water

Washington Elementary School found elevated levels of lead in one classroom sink. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to better understand the health effects of lead and how to reduce your exposure.

What happened?

The exceedance was discovered due to lead and copper samples collected during a routine sampling event. The Norman Public School District is working with DEQ to resolve the issue and to monitor lead exposure. Five locations within the school were sampled, and one location (a classroom sink) exceeded the action level.

What is being done?

The sink has been disconnected and alternate water sources have been provided. Follow-up sampling will be conducted and results will be communicated when they are available. If you are concerned about lead exposure, please contact your healthcare provider.

How Lead Enters Our Water

Lead is a common metal found in the environment, and 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 for certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free” can still contain up to 8.0% lead and may contribute to lead levels in drinking water. EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person’s potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water.

Health Effects of Lead

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys and 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.

For more information, visit <http://www.deq.state.ok.us/mainlinks/media/leadindrinkingwater.html>, www.epa.gov/lead or contact your healthcare provider.