

Flint, MI: Frequently Asked Questions



Should Flint children and young adults get blood lead level testing?

It is important that children and young adults in Flint be tested for lead. CDC/ATSDR suggests all people in Flint up to age 21 should have blood lead testing, and specifically, that all children under six years of age in Flint be tested at least once between October 1, 2015 and April 1, 2016. This is because lead testing may detect which children and young adults currently have high lead levels even if they are not being exposed to tap water at this time.

The impact of lead on children's health and development will persist even after blood lead levels are less than 5µg/dL especially for children under six years of age. Blood lead testing can help provide important information for children's needs now and as they grow.



What are the best practices for using tap water?

- Use NSF® certified water filters in your home, and run only cold water through the filters. Filters can be obtained at select Fire Stations, local health departments or City Hall.
- Filtered water is a safe option ONLY if your filter is certified to remove lead and you follow all the instructions on how to use it and when to replace it.
- Use filtered or bottled water for drinking (including making coffee, drink mixes, juice, and brushing teeth).
- Bottled water is the safest choice for children under the age of six, including for making infant formula.
- Use filtered or bottled water for cooking.
- Use filtered water to wash fruits and vegetables.
- Use filtered or unfiltered tap water for washing hands and dishes.
- Boiling water will not remove lead.



Should children drink the tap water in Flint?

Bottled water is the safest choice for children under the age of six, including for making infant formula.



Should pregnant women drink the tap water in Flint?

The safest choice for women who are trying to become pregnant, women who are pregnant or women who are breastfeeding is to use bottled water for drinking and cooking. Bottled water is also best for making infant formula.



Breastfeeding

Breastmilk is the preferred food for babies, providing the best nutrition and many health benefits.

If I am breastfeeding and I live in Flint, should I get my blood lead level tested?

Yes, if you are breastfeeding and you are concerned you have recently been exposed to lead, you should get your blood lead level tested. Blood lead testing is available at your doctor, health care provider or the Genesee County Health Department. If you are a Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) client, you can be tested at a local WIC office.



Where can I get my water tested?

To get your water tested for free

Email flintwater@cityofflint.com

or call the Flint Water Plant: 810-787-6537



Where can I find more information?

More information is available at

<http://www.phe.gov/emergency/events/Flint/Pages/water.aspx>



If I am breastfeeding, should my baby have a blood lead test?

ALL babies in Flint should be tested for lead, regardless of how your baby is being fed. The testing can occur as soon as possible after birth. In fact, it is recommended that **ALL CHILDREN** in Flint under the age of 6 years be tested at least once between October 1, 2015 and April 1, 2016.

Where can I get blood lead testing for myself and my baby?

Your doctor or your local health department can do blood lead testing. If you are on the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, WIC offices in the Flint area can also do blood lead testing for mothers, babies and children.



Can I still breastfeed if I have been exposed to lead?

Breast tissue acts as a natural filter so very little lead in the mother's body is passed into the breastmilk. Breastfeeding is recommended unless blood lead levels in the mother are very high (40 µg/dL or greater).

What can I do, as a breastfeeding mother, to keep my baby safe from lead in the water?

The safest choice for pregnant and breastfeeding women is to use bottled water for drinking, cooking, and making any supplemental infant formula. Filtered water is a safe option **ONLY** if your filter is certified to remove lead and you follow all the instructions on how to use it and when to replace it. Good nutrition also helps. Talk with your doctor, health care provider, or a Women, Infants and Children (WIC) dietitian, if you are a WIC recipient, about foods rich in iron, calcium and vitamin C.



Can Flint residents bathe and wash hands with tap water?

Human skin does not absorb lead from water. Even if unfiltered tap water contains lead at EPA's action level (15 parts per billion and above), washing your hands, bathing and showering should be safe for children and adults even if the skin has minor cuts or scrapes. Children and adults should not drink, brush teeth, or rinse their mouths with bath or shower water. (From [CDC Lead Poisoning Prevention](#) and EPA Lead in water resources.)

Can Flint residents wash dishes and laundry with tap water?

Lead in water will not be absorbed by porcelain, metal or glass. Filtered or unfiltered tap water can be used for washing dishes.



Unfiltered tap water can be used to wash laundry. If lead absorbs into some types of fabrics it still will not be absorbed by human skin. Laundered or washed items will not contain enough lead residue to pose a concern. Even if children sometimes put their sleeves or other clothing parts into their mouths, this will not hurt them.

Do we know if the water is causing rashes?

Although rashes are common in the general population and there are numerous known causes, it is not currently known if tap water is one of the causes. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is responding to all questions about rashes or other health concerns reported by members of the public. MDHHS recently put into place a plan to better understand rashes that are being reported by members of the public.



Can my pets drink Flint tap water?

- In the event of lead- contaminated water, use filtered or bottled water for your pet's drinking water.
- Use bottled or filtered water when making your pet's food.
- Do not allow pets to drink out of an unfiltered water source.
- Always keep the toilet seat down and the water taps completely off to keep your pets from drinking unfiltered water.
- Lead poisoning is a potentially serious condition that calls for veterinary attention. If you suspect your pet has been exposed to lead contaminated drinking water, contact a local veterinarian to talk about testing and treatment.
- For more information on lead poisoning in pets, please visit the Taking Action on Flint Water site at <http://www.michigan.gov/flintwater> or http://www.michigan.gov/flintwater/0,6092,7-345-75251_75464---,00.html

