

**Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Lead in Drinking Water Information**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. Please read this notice closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

Edwardsville Campus Drinking Water – Background and Current Status

This information is being provided again as required by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency due to University ownership of the campus water system. There has been no change in what was previously reported in August and early September to the University community regarding lead found in the drinking water on the Edwardsville campus. The water in campus buildings remains available for unrestricted use with the few exceptions noted below.

As the owner of our campus water system, the University is required to regularly test the water. Testing performed in August 2016 found that water in five buildings contained lead exceeding the action level of 15 parts per billion. The University community was immediately notified of the results, and alternative temporary water coolers were distributed for use.

As previous rounds of testing had found only isolated occurrences of lead on the Edwardsville campus, the University conducted extensive additional testing in campus buildings. Water containing lead over the action level was found to be limited to specific locations in the five buildings. All other samples taken on campus were below the action level for lead. The University community was also notified of these results.

As a result, sinks in a mechanical room and several custodial closets of four buildings were labeled not to be used for drinking water. A single drinking fountain in the Lovejoy Library was taken out of service until it can be replaced. In Science Laboratory West, the drinking fountains were taken out of service and alternate drinking water provided by a bottled water service pending further evaluation of the building plumbing system. After an evening or weekend, the tap water in Science Laboratory West should continue to be run for at least three (3) minutes before being used and cold water should be used.

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.

Sources of Lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources are lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, toys, playground equipment, jewelry and cosmetics. Brass plumbing fixtures may contribute lead to drinking water. Until January 2014, federal law allowed brass plumbing fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be used and labeled as “lead free.”

SIUE purchases water for the campus from the City of Edwardsville. The city water does not contain lead, and there are no lead water lines serving the campus. However, lead may enter drinking water from components of the plumbing inside the buildings. The Environmental Protection Agency 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

1. Run the water to flush out lead. As noted above, the water in the Science Laboratory West should continue to be allowed to run at least three (3) minutes after an evening or weekend. At other locations on campus, while not required, you may run the water for 15 to 30 seconds after an evening or weekend.
2. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula. Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap as lead dissolves more easily into hot water.
3. Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.
4. Some buildings on campus have a combination bottle filler-drinking fountain that includes a filter which removes lead. A green “Filter Status” light on the fountain indicates that the filter is good. If the light is yellow or red, please contact the Facilities Management Department at x-3711 to have the filter replaced.
5. Water testing for lead. As the owner of our campus water system, the University will continue to conduct testing of campus drinking water for lead, and report and respond to results which exceed the action level.
6. 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.

For More Information

Please contact Paul Fuligni, the Director of Facilities Management, at 650-2560. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA’s Web site at www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.