

A NOTICE TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS, and STAFF

Hoosic Valley Central School District

Lead Testing of School Drinking Water

November 8, 2016

Safe and healthy school environments can foster healthy and successful children. To protect public health, the Public Health Law and New York State Health Department (NYSDOH) regulations require that all public schools and boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) test lead levels in water from every outlet that is being used, or could potentially be used, for drinking or cooking. If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 15 parts per billion (ppb), which is equal to 15 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$), the NYSDOH requires that the school take action to reduce the exposure to lead.

What is first draw testing of school drinking water for lead?

The “on-again, off-again” nature of water use at most schools can raise lead levels in school drinking water. Water that remains in pipes overnight, over a weekend, or over vacation periods stays in contact with lead pipes or lead solder and, as a result, could contain higher levels of lead. This is why schools are required to collect a sample after the water has been sitting in the plumbing system for a certain period of time. This “first draw” sample is likely to show higher levels of lead for that outlet than what you would see if you sampled after using the water continuously. However, even if the first draw sample does not reflect what you would see with continuous usage, it is still important because it can identify outlets that have elevated lead levels.

What are the results of the first draw testing?

On September 27th a total of 117 water samples were taken at the Elementary School. Of the samples only one classroom water bubbler fountain or drinking source was found with elevated levels of lead. The Elementary, however, had six sinks with higher than acceptable levels as outlined below. All of the 117 samples tested below the acceptable levels of copper.

Elementary Elevated Lead Level Results- Associated Fixtures

Location- Elementary School

Room 65- Classroom

Room 52- Classroom

Room 50- Classroom

Room 11- Classroom

Girls Bathroom- Upper Wing

Auditorium Wing Women’s Restroom

Auditorium Wing Women’s Restroom

Type/ Containment level - Action to be taken

Room Bubbler (198 ppb) - Water Supply shut off

Room Sink Faucet (28.4 ppb) - Water Supply shut off

Room Sink Faucet (23.8 ppb) - Water Supply shut off

Room Sink Faucet (16 ppb) - Water Supply shut off

#18-Sink Faucet (14.8 ppb) - Water Supply shut off

#62-Sink Faucet (31.3 ppb) - Water Supply shut off

#63-Sink Faucet (14.6 ppb) – Water Supply shut off

The district is still awaiting the laboratory results of an additional twelve outlets sampled on September 29th.

What is being done in response to the results?

Outlets that tested with lead levels above or at the action level (15 ppb) were removed from service. The water supply was immediately shut off to all the fixtures stated above and steps are being taken to replace the fixtures. The site will be re-tested before the sinks and fountain are put back into use. Outlets that tested below the action level by 0.6 ppb or more remain in service with no restrictions.

What are the health effects of lead?

Lead is a metal that can harm children and adults when it gets into their bodies. Lead is a known neurotoxin, particularly harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of children under 6 years old. Lead can harm a young child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. Lead exposure during pregnancy may contribute to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. There are many sources of lead exposure in the environment, and it is important to reduce all lead exposures as much as possible. Water testing helps identify and correct possible sources of lead that contribute to exposure from drinking water.

What are the other sources of lead exposure?

Lead is a metal that has been used for centuries for many purposes, resulting in widespread distribution in the environment. Major sources of lead exposure include lead-based paint in older housing, and lead that built up over decades in soil and dust due to historical use of lead in gasoline, paint, and manufacturing. Lead can also be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, foods, plumbing materials, and cosmetics. Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies but drinking water could become a possible source of lead exposure if the building's plumbing contains lead. The primary source of lead exposure for most children with elevated blood lead levels is lead-based paint.

Should your child be tested for lead?

The risk to an individual child from past exposure to elevated lead in drinking water depends on many factors; for example, a child's age, weight, amount of water consumed, and the amount of lead in the water. Children may also be exposed to other significant sources of lead including paint, soil and dust. Since blood lead testing is the only way to determine a child's blood lead level, parents should discuss their child's health history with their child's physician to determine if blood lead testing is appropriate. Pregnant women or women of childbearing age should also consider discussing this matter with their physician.

Additional Resources

For more information regarding the testing program or sampling results,
contact Andrew Davey at (518)753-4458 ext. 1504, or go to our school website:
<http://www.hoosicvalley.k12.ny.us>

For information about lead in school drinking water, go to:
http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htm

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/LeadTestinginSchoolDrinkingWater.html>

For information about NYS Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention, go to:
<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

For more information on blood lead testing and ways to reduce your child's risk of exposure to lead, see "What Your Child's Blood Lead Test Means":
<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2526/> (available in ten languages).