



James Mueller, Mayor

Homeowner Guide to Managing Lead in Drinking Water

The City of South Bend treats, tests, and distributes high quality water to you and the community. Water provided by the City of South Bend is lead-free when it leaves our treatment plants. The city water mains that distribute water throughout the community are made mostly of iron. After water leaves the city water main, its quality may change as the water flows through customer-owned service lines and in-home plumbing and fixtures that may contain lead. The City of South Bend takes the issue of lead in drinking water very seriously, and as a result, we offer this fact sheet to help you identify potential sources of lead in your home, learn how lead can affect your health and, most importantly, how to maintain high quality water and reduce exposure to lead.

Potential Sources of Lead

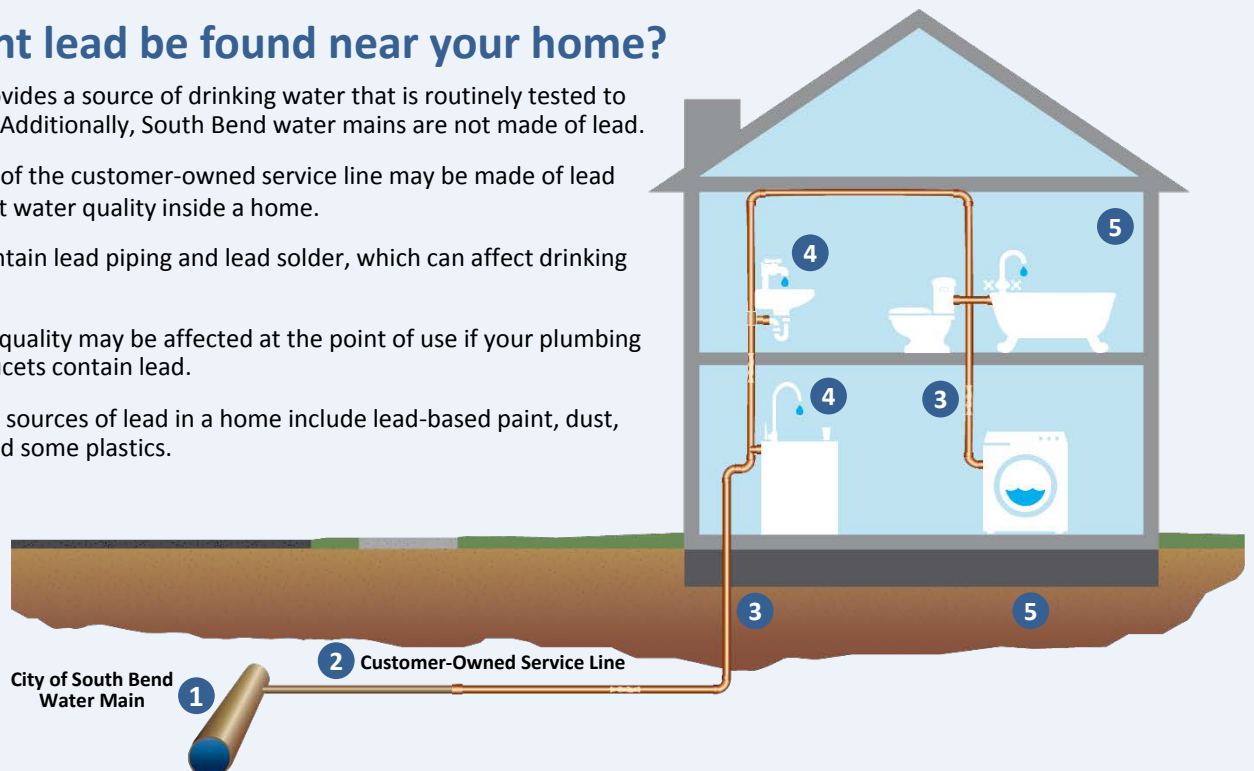
Lead is a naturally occurring material used in many residential and industrial products, meaning we may be exposed to it at work or at home. Historically, lead was considered a good material for plumbing because it easily forms into different shapes and resists leaks. For this reason, many homes may have lead-containing service lines to the house, pipes in the house, and kitchen and bath fixtures. Lead may also be found in paint and other products, especially in older homes. See the illustration below for more information.

Exposure to Lead Can Affect Your Health

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention agree that there is no known safe level of lead in children. Lead exposure can damage the brain and nervous system and affect growth and development, learning and behavior, and hearing and speech. Lead can also pass from pregnant or nursing mothers to their children. In adults, lead can affect cardiovascular and reproductive health, increase blood pressure, and decrease kidney function.

Where might lead be found near your home?

- 1 South Bend provides a source of drinking water that is routinely tested to verify it is safe. Additionally, South Bend water mains are not made of lead.
- 2 All or a portion of the customer-owned service line may be made of lead and could affect water quality inside a home.
- 3 Homes may contain lead piping and lead solder, which can affect drinking water quality.
- 4 Drinking water quality may be affected at the point of use if your plumbing fixtures and faucets contain lead.
- 5 Other potential sources of lead in a home include lead-based paint, dust, soil, jewelry, and some plastics.



Simple Tips

to reduce lead exposure in your home

- 1 Test your water** if you are concerned about lead in your drinking water. Tests should be performed by a state certified laboratory. The cost for the test is between \$10 and \$50. A list of certified laboratories can be found here: in.gov/isdh/22452.htm.
- 2 Inspect your in-home water treatment devices** and water softeners; they may increase lead levels in your water. Consult the manufacturer about how the device may affect your drinking water or plumbing. Avoid drinking softened water, as metals from your pipes are more likely to dissolve into soft water than in hard water.
- 3 Filter your water.** Use a water filter that is NSF certified for lead removal. Many filters and filter systems can improve water quality and taste in other ways too. Visit nsf.org for more information.
- 4 Flush your tap for at least 30 seconds** before drinking or cooking if the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than 6 hours. After flushing, use the water for cooking or drinking, or save it for later use by filling pitchers. To conserve water, save the water from flushing the tap for watering plants or doing dishes.
- 5 Use cold tap water** for drinking and preparing food. Hot water is more likely to contain lead than cold water.
- 6 Install lead-free faucets and fixtures** that are certified to contain no lead. Look for lead certification marks indicating the new product is lead free, and then replace old faucets and fixtures. Visit nepis.epa.gov and search for lead free certification for more information.
- 7 Remove faucet aerators and flush** cold water taps regularly. Aerators can collect particles from lead plumbing and should be removed and cleaned on a regular basis. It is especially important after household plumbing work and repairs. After removing the aerator, flush the cold water lines for 3 to 5 minutes.



Please contact us with questions and for more information:

City of South Bend
Water Quality Staff
waterquality@southbendin.gov
574-235-5994 or 574-235-9670



For more information...

The City of South Bend is committed to providing a safe source of drinking water to its residents, and our staff work hard to keep that commitment. Because property owners in South Bend own their water service lines, there is a shared responsibility to manage lead exposure. We are ready to work with you to answer your questions about water quality and help reduce lead exposure.

Please use these resources for more information:

- southbendin.gov/lead – City of South Bend website with more information and helpful tips on lead in drinking water
- in.gov/idem/6968.htm – Indiana Department of Environmental Management information on lead
- epa.gov/lead – Resources to understand and reduce lead exposure from the United States Environmental Protection Agency
- **Lead Hotline** – Contact the National Lead Information Center's hotline at 1 (800) 424-LEAD [5323]