



## Guide To Managing Lead in Your Home



### Why Check For Lead?

San Antonio Water System is working to identify customer-owned water service lines that contain lead material. We are doing this as part of a new program required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

This fact sheet will help you identify potential sources of lead in your home. You'll also learn how lead can affect your health and, most importantly, how to reduce lead exposure for you and your family and friends.



### Exposure to Lead Can Affect Your Health

Exposure to lead can cause serious health issues in all age groups. Infants and children are of special concern since high lead exposure can affect IQ and attention span. Potential impacts can include:

- Learning and behavior problems — lead exposure may also worsen existing issues.
- Children of women exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk.
- Adults can have increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease and/or nervous system problems.

### Potential Sources of Lead

Lead is a naturally occurring material that was used for many years in residential and industrial plumbing products. Historically, lead was considered a good material for plumbing because it could easily form into different shapes and resist leaks.

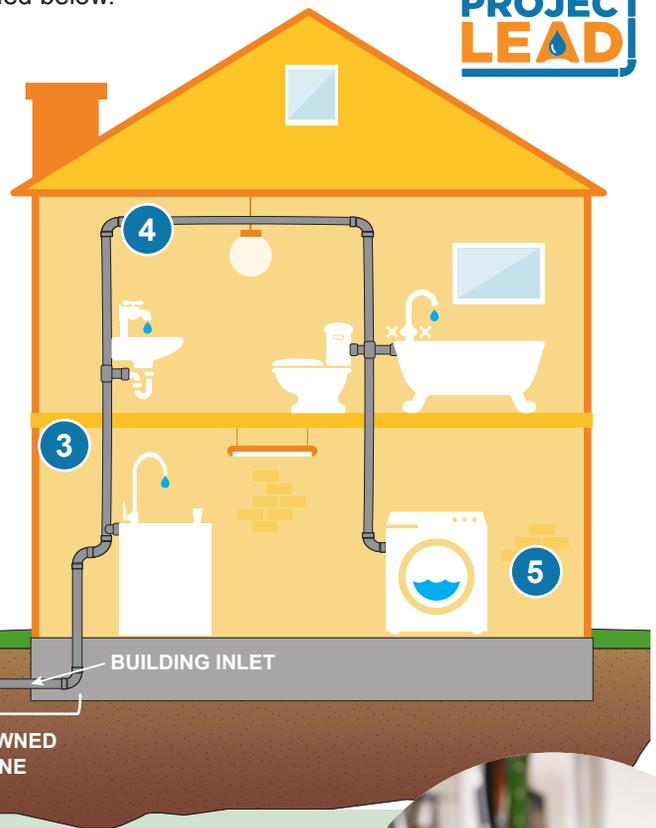
For this reason, older homes may have lead-containing service lines, plumbing, and kitchen or bath fixtures. Lead may also be found in paint and other products, especially in older homes.

Please visit the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District website at [sanantonio.gov/health](http://sanantonio.gov/health) for more information.

**Lead exposure can occur from multiple sources within a home.** Additional information about your drinking water system and potential sources of lead are included below.



- 1 SAWS provides a source of drinking water that is routinely tested to verify it is safe. Additionally, SAWS water mains are not made of lead.
- 2 The water service line consists of a portion owned by the customer and a portion owned by SAWS. Either portion could be made of lead, which could affect water quality inside a home.
- 3 Homes may contain lead piping and lead solder, which can also affect drinking water quality.
- 4 Drinking water quality may also 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

- ▶ Test your water if you are concerned about lead in your drinking water. Tests should be performed by a state certified laboratory.
- ▶ Flush your tap for at least 5 minutes before drinking or cooking if the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than 6 hours (for example, first thing in the morning).
- ▶ Filter your water. Use a water filter that is NSF 53 certified for lead removal. Many filters and filter systems can improve water quality and taste in other ways too. Visit [nsf.org](http://nsf.org) for more information.
- ▶ Use cold tap water for drinking and preparing food. Hot water is more likely to contain lead than cold water.
- ▶ Clean 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 5 minutes.



## For More Information



SAWS works hard to provide a safe source of drinking water to our customers. Because property owners within the SAWS service area own their water service lines, there is a shared responsibility to manage potential lead exposure. We are ready to work with you to answer your questions about water quality and Project Lead.

- **SAWS website**  
Information and helpful tips on lead in drinking water: [saws.org/lead](http://saws.org/lead)
- **San Antonio Metropolitan Health District**  
Information on health impacts and childhood blood lead level testing: [sanantonio.gov/health](http://sanantonio.gov/health)
- **Texas Commission on Environmental Quality**  
Drinking Water Lead and Copper Program:  
[tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/chemicals/lead\\_copper](http://tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/chemicals/lead_copper)
- **United States Environmental Protection Agency**  
Resources to understand and reduce lead exposure: [epa.gov/lead](http://epa.gov/lead)
- **National Lead Hotline: 1-800-424-LEAD (5323)**