

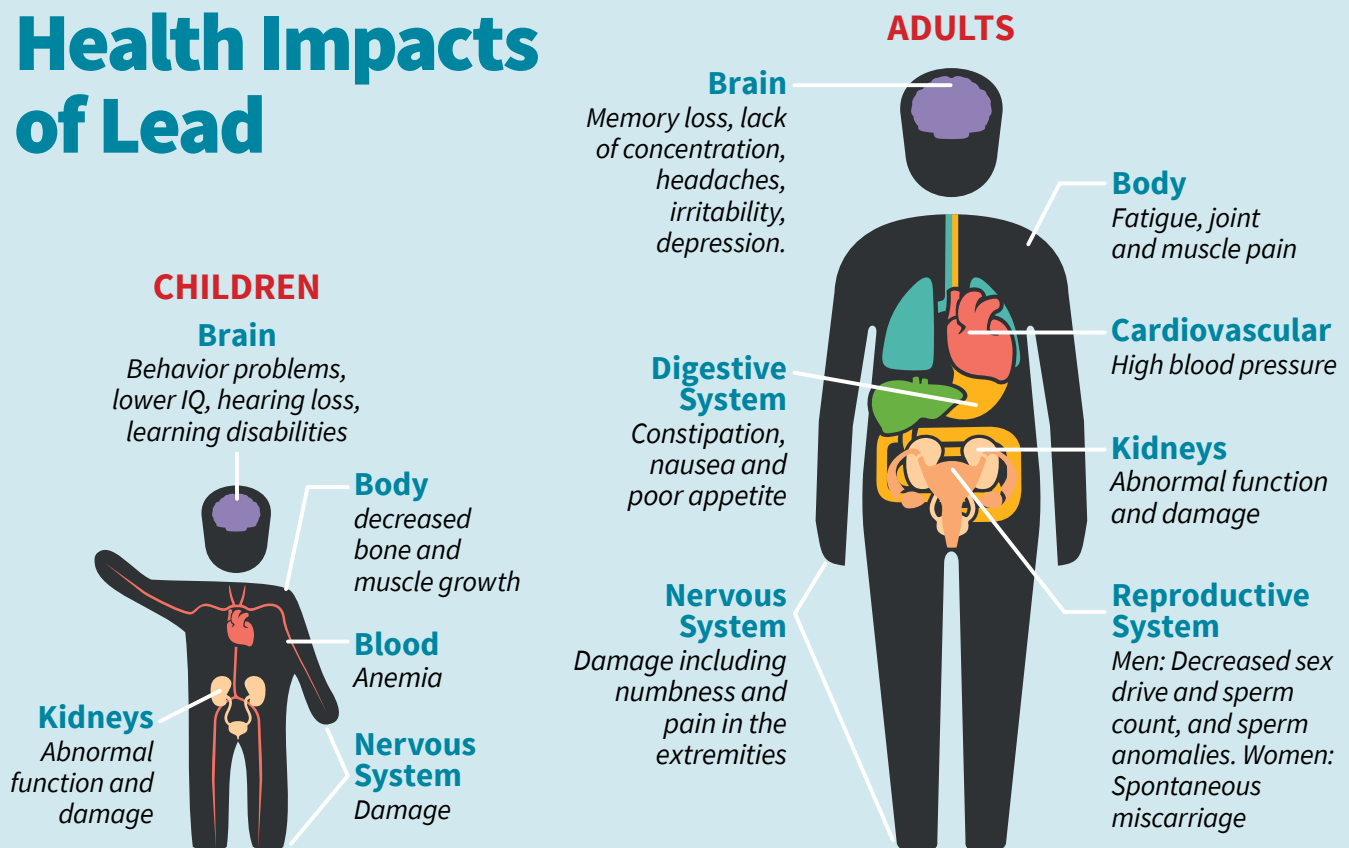
Lead and Drinking Water

Lead is a highly poisonous metal and can affect almost every organ in the body and the nervous system. People can be exposed to lead through inhalation, ingestion and to a lesser extent, dermal contact. Because they absorb more lead than adults and because their brains and nervous systems are still developing, children under 6 and the developing fetus are most susceptible to lead exposure. Even low-level exposure to lead is linked to cardiovascular disease in adults. The most common source of lead exposure is ingestion of old lead paint. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that lead in drinking water can be 20% or more of a person's lead exposure.

Getting the Lead Out: To protect public health, we must reduce lead exposure at the drinking water tap. To make this a reality Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund are:

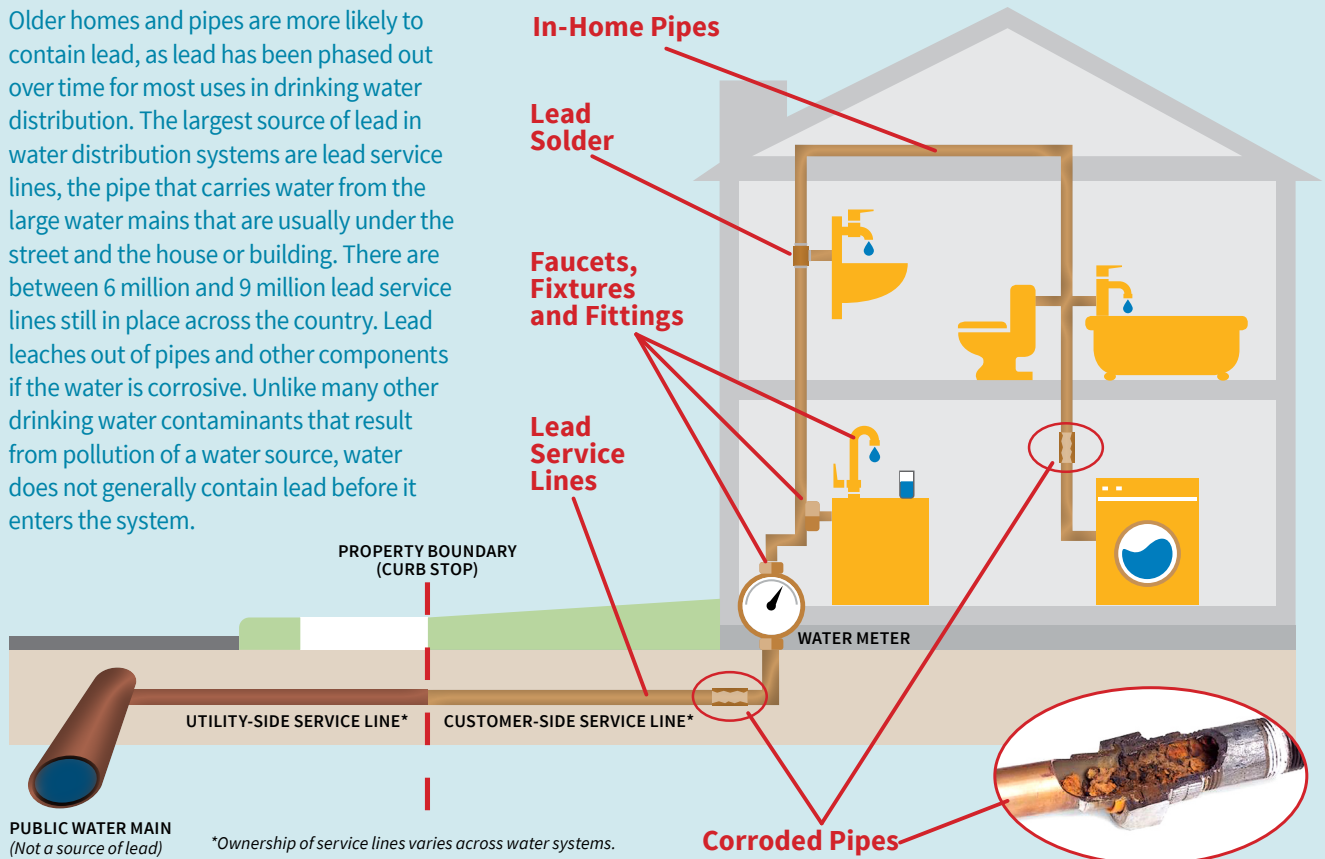
- working for improvements in the Safe Drinking Water Act Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), which EPA is expected to propose in late 2023;
- supporting communities and water systems in accelerating full replacement of lead service lines through our work with the Lead Service Line Collaborative (www.lslr-collaborative.org);
- ensuring that water infrastructure funding made possible by the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is spent equitably and effectively, including the \$15 billion available for lead service line replacement.

Health Impacts of Lead



How Lead Gets Into Drinking Water

Older homes and pipes are more likely to contain lead, as lead has been phased out over time for most uses in drinking water distribution. The largest source of lead in water distribution systems are lead service lines, the pipe that carries water from the large water mains that are usually under the street and the house or building. There are between 6 million and 9 million lead service lines still in place across the country. Lead leaches out of pipes and other components if the water is corrosive. Unlike many other drinking water contaminants that result from pollution of a water source, water does not generally contain lead before it enters the system.



Protect Yourself from Lead in Drinking Water

- **Learn about lead levels in your community.** Every year, public water systems prepare a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), which includes information on lead monitoring results. For more information and help finding your CCR: <https://www.epa.gov/ccr>. Water systems also post lead monitoring results online.
- **Run your water before drinking or cooking.** The longer water sits in pipes, the more lead it may contain. When water has not been used for 6 hours or more, running water 1–3 minutes until it becomes cold can help ensure you are not using water that has been sitting in the pipes. This water can be used for watering plants or other non-consumption uses.
- **Have your water tested.** If you are concerned about lead in your tap water you can test for lead and other contaminants. Some water systems will provide lead testing for their customers. Others will provide information on local laboratories and other resources. There are low cost tests available. Call your water system to see if testing is available.
- **Use cold water for drinking and eating.** Cold water is less likely to contain lead. Never add warm water to baby formula. Boiling water will not remove lead.
- **Choose the right filter.** Only specific products are designed to reduce lead contamination. If you choose to use filters, consult your water system and learn more about products: <http://bit.ly/NSFlead>

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LEAD IN DRINKING WATER, GO TO: cleanwater.org/lead