

# Lead Testing In School Drinking Water

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November 2, 2018

**A NOTICE TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS, and STAFF**  
**of the**  
**Spencerport Central School District**  
**Lead Testing of School Drinking Water**

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Safe and healthy school environments can foster healthy and successful children. To protect public health, recently enacted 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?**

To date, 500 outlets in total have been identified as possible locations of drinking or cooking water. Testing of 484 initial outlets began on January 21, 2017, and the results of the analysis were received on February 8, 2017. 55 of those outlets were identified as having higher than acceptable levels of lead in the water. All outlets were removed from service immediately. The initial results broke down at the buildings as follows:

*Leo Bernabi Elementary, 95 outlets tested, 0 were high*  
*Canal View Elementary, 97 outlets tested, 0 were high*  
*Cosgrove Middle School, 36 outlets tested, 2 were high*  
*E.J. Wilson High School, 57 outlets tested, 5 were high*  
*Wm. Munn Elementary School, 81 outlets tested, 31 were high*  
*Terry Taylor Elementary School, 99 outlets tested, 16 were high*  
*District Office and Maint. Garage, 15 outlets tested, 1 was high*  
*Transportation Building, 4 outlets tested, 0 were high*

**What has been done in response to the results?**

As of February 8, 2017 all outlets which tested high have been taken out of service. Follow up testing was performed on the 55 outlets on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of 2017, to confirm if any lead contamination was coming from the immediate water fixture and not the main piping. That testing took place during the week of February 20, 2017. Based on those confirming results, all outlets which tested high were taken out of service, repaired and re-tested.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017, 5 more outlets were identified, 1 at the HS and 4 at Cosgrove. All 4 outlets

returned results for lead below the EPA recommended level.

On March 9th, 2017, 7 more outlets were identified, 2 at the HS and 5 at Cosgrove. All 7 outlets returned results for lead below the EPA recommended level.

On May 8th, 2018, 4 additional outlets were identified and tested, 3 at the Bernabi and 1 at Cosgrove. All 4 outlets returned results for lead below the EPA recommended level.

The current state legislation mandates follow up testing of all the same outlets every 5 years. The next testing will be scheduled during 2020 to confirm they are safe to use.

### **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, feel free to contact**

*Nelson Drake – Director of Facilities at (585)349-5195*

**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.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).