

FACTS

As we have reported to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, our water quality testing program has found elevated levels of lead in the drinking water in a limited number of homes in Bergen and Hudson counties.

The water leaving our plant has no detectable level of lead. In addition, we have no lead water mains. The likely source of lead in the drinking water is from the service lines – pipes that extend from the water mains to the homes and businesses, and from lead fixtures in customer homes.

Water quality is so important to us that we perform nearly 50,000 tests each year in this system alone. One part of our rigorous testing program is to test for lead in the water, and when we do, we test homes known to be served by lead service lines. All of the 108 homes we recently tested had lead service lines and the results showed lead levels above the government standard in 16 of those homes.

Approximately 5 percent of the utility-owned service lines in our system – we own the pipe from the main to the property line – contain lead. An additional 15 percent of our system has lead goosenecks – a short piece of flexible piping that connects a water main to a service line.

To prevent lead from leaching into the water, we have had a corrosion control treatment program in place for decades. Essentially, this coats the pipes to prevent lead from entering the water supply. We continue to rigorously monitor our system and will test for the next 12 months to make sure that our corrosion control treatment is working exactly as it should.

STEPS SUEZ IS TAKING FOR CUSTOMERS

- Customers who are served or may be served by a utility-owned lead service line can request a test of their drinking water by calling our customer service center at 800-422-5987
- If a test result is above the government's standard, we will provide a filter that removes lead from drinking water (A BRITA PITCHER)
- We have established a new water quality website – www.SUEZWQ.com -- that provides further details about lead in the drinking water
- For more information or to determine if you are served by a utility-owned lead service line: Check your online account, visit www.SUEZWQ.com or www.mysuezwater.com/njwq, email us at sueznjcustserv@suez-na.com or call our customer service center at 800-422-5987

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FAQs

Q: Is my water safe to drink?

We take the safety of the drinking water seriously. Our customers rely on us, and our employees raise their families here.

The water leaving our plant has no detectable level of lead. We rigorously monitor the water – conducting nearly 50,000 tests a year. This is an issue with the service lines and interior plumbing of homes. If you are among the 5 percent of customers served by a lead service line, the 15 percent with lead goosenecks, or if you had lead fixtures in your home, there is the possibility that lead could enter your drinking water. Even so, it's not certain lead will be found in the water – remember that we tested 108 homes with lead lines and 16 of those were above the safety standard. That is why we are providing testing for customers with lead lines.

Q: Should I have my children tested for lead in their blood?

If you are concerned about lead exposure, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection recommends contacting your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get tested for lead. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead.

Q: I am pregnant or have a baby; should I buy bottled water?

The water distributed from the plant has no detectable levels of lead. To err on the side of caution, if you have a lead line serving your home, a lead gooseneck, or lead pipes or fixtures in your house you may want to take precautions.

Q: To whom does this notice apply?

This applies to our customers in Bergen and Hudson counties.

The notice does not apply to Franklin Lakes or Allendale. It also does not apply to residents in municipalities that contract with SUEZ to operate their water systems. This includes Jersey City, Bayonne, Hoboken, Rahway, Kearny and Orange.

Q: What is SUEZ doing to resolve this issue?

To prevent lead from leaching into the water, we utilize an industry best practice corrosion control program. We have successfully had this in place for decades. Our corrosion control coats the pipes to prevent lead from leaching into the water. We continue to rigorously monitor our system and will test for the next 12 months to make sure that our treatment is working exactly as it should.

The ultimate goal is to remove all lead in the system. In addition to corrosion control, every time that we are doing work in the ground and we see lead, we remove it. We are now expanding that program to more specifically target lead service line replacements in our system.

Q: If my water has high lead levels, is it safe to take a bath or shower?

Yes. As per the Centers for Disease Control, bathing and showering should be safe for you and your children, even if the water contains lead over EPA's action level. Human skin does not absorb lead in water.

Q: What should I do if it is determined I have a lead service line or fixtures?

It is recommended that customers who have lead service lines on their properties hire a licensed contractor to replace the line. If replacing pipes and household plumbing is not an option, many water filters are effective in removing lead. Be sure to check the label or contact the manufacturer to confirm the filter is certified for lead removal.

Q: What can I do to lessen my exposure to lead if it is present?

Before using any tap water for drinking or cooking, flush your water system by running the kitchen tap (or any other tap you take drinking or cooking water from) on COLD for 1–2 minutes. Never use hot water from the faucet for drinking or cooking, especially when making baby formula or food for infants.

Q. How do I get my water tested if my address is not on the list of utility-owned lead lines?

If you are concerned, you may contact a laboratory that will perform a test. The following labs are among those listed on the DEP's water quality website:

AGRA Environmental and Laboratory Services -- 973-989-0010

APL (Aqua Pro-Tech Laboratories -- 973-227-0422

EMSL -- 856-303-2546

Eurofins Eaton Analytical -- 800-332-4345

Garden State Laboratories -- 908-688-8900

Hampton- Clarke -- 973-244-9770

For more information, visit SUEZWQ.com.