
From: Busch, Stephen (DEQ)
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2015 11:40 AM
To: Shekter Smith, Liane (DEQ) (SHEKTERL@michigan.gov); Richard Benzie P.E. (BENZIER@michigan.gov)
Subject: FW: Flint Water Question from a Pregnant Flint Resident

FYI. Note the second paragraph in the response from Rita regarding sampling technique.

Stephen Busch, P.E.
 Lansing and Jackson District Supervisor
 Office of Drinking Water and Municipal Assistance
 MDEQ
 517-643-2314

From: Crooks, Jennifer [mailto:crooks.jennifer@epa.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2015 8:50 AM
To: Busch, Stephen (DEQ); Prysby, Mike (DEQ); Cook, Pat (DEQ)
Cc: Philip, Kris (DEQ)
Subject: FW: Flint Water Question from a Pregnant Flint Resident

FYI—our response to a citizen complaint from Flint.
 Jennifer

From: Mona Munroe-Younis [mailto:mona.m.younis@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2015 7:45 AM
To: Bair, Rita
Cc: Crooks, Jennifer; Deltoral, Miguel; Harris, Kimberly; Porter, Andrea
Subject: RE: Flint Water Question from a Pregnant Flint Resident

Hi Rita,

Thank you very much for your detailed response. It is helpful and I appreciate it greatly.

All the best,
 Mona

On Jul 14, 2015 5:22 PM, "Bair, Rita" <bair_rita@epa.gov> wrote:

We are responding to your email of July 11, 2015 to Miguel Del Toral. He is out of the office today, but has provided the following information to your lead questions. Overall, he agrees with Marc's responses on the water filter. Filters that are certified to remove lead are typically designed to remove 99 percent of the lead. They are also designed with additional capacity as a safety measure, but you should still change the filter in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If you identify elevated lead levels from other taps that do not have water filters, we suggest either adding a filter to those, such as the bathroom tap, or only using the filtered tap water for consumption.

If you are still interested in having your water tested you should use a laboratory that has been certified by the State for drinking water analyses (a list is available from the following link: http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3307_4131_4156-36940--,00.html). Please note that a first-draw sample, regardless of pre-flushing, is best for identifying lead that comes from the faucet and other in-home piping or fittings close to the faucet. First-draw sampling does not give a good indication of the lead contribution from sources further from the faucet (i.e. lead service line, leaded brass meter, etc.). Information for residents about first-draw sampling instructions can be found on the last page of the 2006 memo on aerators and LCR sampling at the following link: http://www.epa.gov/ogwdw/lcrmr/pdfs/memo_tapsamples-aerators_10202006.pdf. In addition, below are two graphics from our Region 5 website with information about how to identify if you have a lead service line coming into your home and for faucets that do not have filters on them, how to clean the aerators.

Regarding your TTHM question, EPA has considered developmental and reproductive risks from multiple intake routes of exposure (e.g., ingestion, inhalation, and dermal) in our 2006 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts (DBPR) rule. Some studies did suggest associations between TTHM exposure and various adverse reproductive and development health effects. However, studies available overall showed inconsistent results. As such, our Agency could not conclude whether exposure to TTHMs could cause adverse reproductive/developmental health effects. However, we did note in our findings that there was the potential for concern.

Currently, we are in the process of re-evaluating our DBPR rules and considering new toxicological data regarding reproductive and developmental health effects. Until our evaluation is complete, pregnant women can elect to take additional precautionary measures such as taking shorter showers, venting the room while showering/bathing, and not ingesting water with high TTHM concentrations.

We hope this information is helpful to you.

Rita D. Bair

Section 2 Chief

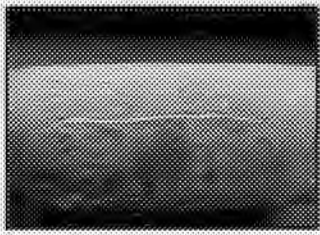
Ground Water and Drinking Water Branch

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What do lead service lines look like?



Lead service lines are generally a dull gray color and are very soft. You can identify them easily by carefully scratching with a key. If the pipe is made of lead, the area you've scratched will turn a bright silver color. Do not use a knife or other sharp instrument and take care not to puncture a hole in the pipe.



Lead service lines can be connected to the residential plumbing using solder and have a characteristic solder "bulb" at the end, a compression fitting, or other connector made of galvanized iron or brass/bronze.



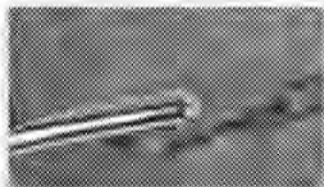
Lead service lines often end just inside the front or side wall of the home, but may extend further into the building as shown, where the lead service line comes out of the basement floor to the water meter and then back into the floor, continuing further into the building.



If your home has a water meter, your water meter may be in your home or "meter pit" or "meter vault" as shown above.

Cleaning aerators

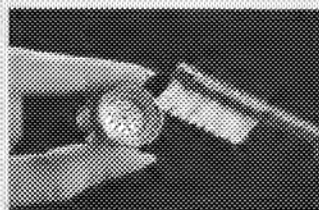
Many taps have an aerator as part of the faucet assembly. Aerator screens are not intended to remove contaminants in water, but may trap sediment or debris as water passes through the faucet. Lead-bearing sediment may end up in drink water from physical corrosion of leaded solder and can build up in the aerator over time.



1. Remove the aerator by twisting off with hands or pliers.



2. One or more parts are contained within the aerator. Note the order and orientation of the parts as you remove them.



3. Rinse the pieces with water and brush off the debris. For deposits that are difficult to remove, soak the parts in water for a few minutes and scrub with a toothbrush. Backwashing aerator components is also an effective cleaning method for many aerator types. Hold the removed aerator upside down under flowing water to backwash screens and mesh filters.



4. Reassemble the aerator, screw it back onto the faucet and hand-tighten. If any parts are cracked or broken, replace them. If the aerator washer has hardened, it should be replaced.

From: Mona Munroe-Younis [mailto:mona.m.younis@gmail.com]

Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2015 5:57 PM

To: deltoral.miguel@epa.gov; edwardsm@vt.edu

Subject: Flint Water Question from a Pregnant Flint Resident

Dear Dr. Edwards and Dr. Del Toral,

Thank you for the work you have already done in my city to protect families from water contaminant exposure. I am a Flint resident, pregnant with my first child, and therefore advised to drink a whopping 10-16 cups of water each day. I am writing to see if you can shed some light or point me to another source for answers regarding water testing and the safest option for staying hydrated.

If your wife or sister or friend were living in Flint and pregnant, what course of action would you recommend she take? Here is my situation:

- A little background: Prior to becoming pregnant, I installed a pur advanced water filter on our kitchen faucet and always use it when drinking from the tap, which I do frequently. (According to the pur website, the filter is said to filter out 70+ chemicals. Recently, I contacted the company to request more information on exactly what chemicals are filtered and up to what level, and am awaiting their reply.) When using the filter, the water is crystal clear, free of the river smell and without the slight yellow tinge that we sometimes have coming out of the tap (unlike in our bathroom sink which I use to brush my teeth...). I was compelled to purchase the filter because my legs began to swell after Flint changed to the river water, and after installing the filter this problem went away. I even tested the difference by drinking filtered water some days (consistently no swelling) and and unfiltered water others (consistent swelling) for a week or two. I understand the swelling to be the result of sodium chloride in our water which is corrosive enough to make GM stop using Flint water in their local plant (http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2014/10/general_motors_wont_use_flint.html)
- Given your findings of high levels of lead in some residents' water, my husband strongly believes that I should cease drinking all Flint water and drink bottled water instead. However, I have read extensively about safety concerns of plastic-bottled water (chemists who work with plastics avoid drinking it) and this does not seem to be a safer option despite frequent bottled water drives organized by well-meaning activists across Flint.
- I would like to test our house's tap water with and without the kitchen filter using an independent lab, but my husband thinks this will be a futile effort because we have no reliable way of knowing if the results on one day will be consistent with results on other days, such as if the City of Flint were doing some special change to the water treatment procedure. Would testing multiple times across several weeks be sufficient to address this possibility? If so, how many times and at what interval would you recommend testing, and can you recommend a testing lab? If a high level of lead is discovered, who should we contact to determine where the lead is coming from as a next step?
- According to the consultant that Erin Brockovich sent to Flint earlier this year (http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2015/02/tthm_how_worried_should_flint.html), total trihalomethanes (TTHM) in the water are dangerous to pregnant women through inhalation exposure during hot showers. (And pregnant women tend to appreciate long, hot showers because our backs are constantly aching!) At this point, the lead issues seem more frightening, though we are considering investing in a costly whole-house water filtration system to deal with both. How can we determine the relative risk to pregnant women for lead in the water vs. TTHMs? I suppose that could differ from house to house. What sort of whole-house filtration would you recommend?
- Are there any other considerations that you think I should keep in mind?

Even for those residents who are privileged to be educated and able to afford water filtration devices, the public water issues we are living with are confounding. The information we receive about our public water supply tends to be fragmented and coming from local public officials who have an interest in downplaying public concerns. In the meantime, it is very difficult to make truly informed decisions about our health.

Thank you in advance for any insights you can share and helping to give my baby a good start in life. I understand if you need to respond as a fellow resident of the world and as experts in general rather than as affiliates of the organizations in which you are employed.

Thank you much.

Mona Munroe-Younis

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