

# Lead in Drinking Water – Public and Nonpublic Schools

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE: ELEVATED WATER SAMPLE RESULT** **Hickory Elementary School**

### **ELEVATED LEAD WATER SAMPLE RESULT**

All Maryland public and nonpublic schools are required to sample all drinking water outlets for the presence of lead pursuant to the Code of Maryland Regulations. On November 8 and 9, 2018, one hundred twenty-four (124) lead water samples were collected from Hickory Elementary School. Of these lead water samples, **four** had levels of lead exceeding the action level of 20 parts per billion (ppb) for lead in drinking water in school buildings. The elevated lead results from the samples collected at Hickory Elementary School were as follows:

**61.2** (parts per billion (ppb) **Kitchen sink on back wall, middle**

**29.0** (parts per billion (ppb) **Kitchen sink, right on back wall**

**39.1** (parts per billion (ppb) **Girl's restroom by faculty room, right sink**

**102** (parts per billion (ppb) **Room 104 sink**

### **ACTION LEVEL (AL)**

The AL is 20 ppb for lead in drinking water in school buildings. The AL is the concentration of lead which, if exceeded, triggers required remediation.

### **HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD**

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Lead is stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the fetus receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults.

### **SOURCES OF HUMAN EXPOSURE TO LEAD**

There are many different sources of human exposure to lead. These include: lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust or soil, some plumbing materials, certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics, exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies, brass faucets, fittings, and valves. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water, while for an infant consuming formula mixed with lead-containing water this may increase to 40 to 60 percent.

### **IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TAKEN**

Results were received on April 2, 2019. The restroom sink and room 104 sink were turned off. The Kitchen sinks had flush samples collected and analyzed at the same time. The flushed samples came back with levels below the detection level. The kitchen will flush the sinks prior to use until the fixtures are replaced and retested. The kitchen sinks will only be used for cleaning until the fixtures are replaced and resampled.

### **NEXT STEPS**

At this time our remedial action is to permanently disconnect the water to the restroom and room 104 sink. When the fixtures are replaced and the results are below the action level, they will be placed back in service. The kitchen sink fixtures will be replaced and resampled.

**TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER:**

1. Run your water to flush out lead: If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 15 to 30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking.
2. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula: Lead from the plumbing dissolves more easily into hot water.

*Please note that boiling the water will not reduce lead levels.*

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

1. For additional information, please contact **Patti Jo Beard, Harford County Public Schools**, at **410-638-4088**. For additional information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead). If you are concerned about exposure; contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead.