

# HOW TO REDUCE LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

## 1. Flush Your Taps.

For most of you, flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive way you can help protect your family's health. Flushing usually uses less than one or two gallons of water and costs only a few cents per month. To flush, let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in a faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer water resides in your plumbing, the more lead it may contain. Since your building most likely has a lead service line to the water main, you should run the cold water faucet until the water has significant temperature change, and then approximately for an additional minute, before drinking. To conserve water, fill a couple of bottles with water after flushing the tap, and when possible use the first flush water to wash dishes or water plants.

## 2. Use only cold water for cooking and drinking.

Try not to cook with, or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water for consumption, heat water from the cold tap on the stove.

## 3. Remove debris from faucet strainers regularly.

Remove loose lead solder and debris that may accumulate in your faucet strainers due to the recent lead service line replacement. You can do this by removing the faucet strainers from all taps and running the water from 3 to 5 minutes. Thereafter, periodically remove the strainers and flush out any debris that has accumulated over time.

## 4. Install a Point of Use / home treatment device.

**Tap filter** These home treatment devices are limited in that each unit treats only the water that flows from the faucet to which it is connected, and all of them require periodic regular maintenance and replacement. Devices such as reverse osmosis systems or distillers can effectively remove lead from your drinking water. Some activated carbon filters *may* reduce lead levels at the tap, however, all lead reduction claims should be investigated. One way to do this is to look for the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) mark. NSF tests and verifies products, such as drinking water treatment units, to determine whether they comply with specific standards, including the claims made by the manufacturer. Those products that pass the NSF's standards can bear the NSF mark. If you want more information about drinking water treatment devices, you can contact NSF at (800-NSF-8010) or visit their web site at [www.nsf.com](http://www.nsf.com).

**Countertop filter** Filtering systems are now widely available at most home-goods or department stores. Again, filters that pass NSF's testing criteria will carry the NSF mark. It is important to follow the product usage and filter replacement instructions. Leaving a filter in for longer than its recommended life can actually cause levels of lead or other contaminants to increase, because of accumulation in the filter. In addition, there is potential for accumulation of bacterial contamination.

## 5. Purchase bottled water for drinking and cooking.

## 6. Replace internal plumbing such as faucets.