

NEWS RELEASE



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Illinois Agencies Support Point of Use Filters to Reduce Lead Exposure *Filters Offer Short-Term Strategy to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water*

SPRINGFIELD - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates there is no safe blood lead level in children. Lead exposures come from a combination of environmental sources, which may include lead in water. U.S. EPA estimates that water can make up 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead, and infants who consume mostly mixed formula can receive 40-60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water. The source of lead in water is most often a building's plumbing system. When a building has a lead service line, the service line is typically the most significant contributor of lead in water.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) support point-of-use (POU) filters as a short-term strategy for reducing lead in drinking water. A POU system filters water at the "point" where water is being used and is installed at the water connection, typically under the sink in the kitchen or bathroom. Water pitchers with POU filters may also be used. POU filters are commercially available and can be effective at removing most lead. There are a number of POU cartridge filter units on the market. They can vary in price and effectiveness. Filters should routinely be replaced or maintained in accordance with manufacturers guidelines and recommendations to remain effective.

To select a lead-reducing POU filter, check with the manufacturer or a third-party website (such as www.nsf.org) to verify the product was tested and certified for lead removal (NSF/ANSI Standard 53). For additional protection for particulate lead, look for a POU filter that is also certified against NSF/ANSI Standard 42 (for class I particulate reduction, 0.5 μm to $<1 \mu\text{m}$). To be effective, the POU filters should be installed at locations used for drinking water or for food preparation according to the manufacturer's instructions. This includes kitchen water faucets and refrigerators with water dispensers and ice makers or in water pitchers.

POU filters should be considered an interim measure until the sources of lead, most notably the lead service line, have been removed and replaced with lead free plumbing materials.

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After replacement of lead plumbing materials or disturbance of a plumbing system, the plumbing system should be flushed for 30 minutes with aerators and screens removed from all faucets. Because you cannot see, smell, or taste lead in water, testing the water is the only way to determine if lead is present in drinking water.

To access additional information about lead in drinking water and a consumer tool for identifying POU filters certified to reduce lead, please visit U.S. EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water> and <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/consumer-tool-identifying-pou-drinking-water-filters-certified-reduce-lead>.

Lead in homes can also come from sources other than water. To access more information about other sources of lead, please visit IDPH's website at: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/illinoislead>. Consider contacting your doctor to have your children tested if you are concerned about lead exposure.

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