

Testing for Lead

How to have your water tested for lead

Lead in tap water typically comes from either the pipe connecting older homes to the water system or from plumbing within the home itself. Therefore, to find out if you have lead in your water, you must test the water inside the home.

Testing your water is easier and less expensive than you may think. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which oversees the quality of tap water, recommends sending samples to a certified laboratory for analysis. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline, at 800-426-4791, can provide a list of qualified labs in your area.

Depending upon the company, a technician may come to your home to collect the sample. However, most will mail you a sampling kit, which you complete and return for analysis. If you are using the mail-in approach, the kit will include instructions. To maximize the accuracy of your results, it is very important to follow the directions. Here are a few key points, which will also likely be included in the sample collection instructions:

- Collect samples from a tap that has not been used for at least six hours, because lead dissolves into water slowly. For best results, draw the sample first thing in the morning.
- Do not run the water before drawing the sample. The water collected for analysis should be the "first draw" from the tap.
- Be sure to use a kitchen or bathroom cold water tap that has been used for drinking or cooking water during the past few weeks.
- Do not clean or remove the faucet aerator prior to sampling. You want tests to account for any particles of lead that may have accumulated in the aerator basket.
- Place the opened sample bottle below the faucet and open the cold water tap as you would do to fill a glass of water.

Results are generally available within two weeks and will rarely take longer than a month. If lead is shown to be present, please contact RAWA for guidance at 610-406-6300. We care about the quality of your drinking water and your family's health.