



Let's talk about the

CHANGES TO THE CITY'S DRINKING WATER



HOW IS THE CITY'S DRINKING WATER CHANGING?

The pH (how acidic or basic the water is) is changing because the City is phasing out the addition of a chemical called sodium hydroxide. Sodium hydroxide was first added to the City's water system in 2018.

WHY DID YOU ADD SODIUM HYDROXIDE TO THE WATER TO BEGIN WITH?

Sodium hydroxide was added to the drinking water system to prevent the breakdown of lead service pipes. This reduces lead in the tap water of those homes with lead service pipes.

DOES THE WATER THAT LEAVES THE BARE POINT WATER TREATMENT PLANT CONTAIN LEAD?

No. The water produced by the City of Thunder Bay's Bare Point Water Treatment Plant does not contain lead.

WHAT DOES THIS CHANGE TO THE DRINKING WATER MEAN FOR ME?

For properties with lead service pipes, leaded-brass fixtures or lead solder, the Water Authority anticipates lead levels will return to what they were prior to 2018.

For all homes, the pH of the water will return to what it was prior to 2018.

HOW CAN LEAD ENTER THE DRINKING WATER IN MY HOME?



Lead can enter the drinking water in your home from the following:

- Lead service pipes, which were used before the mid-1950s, to connect your home's plumbing to the City's watermain
- Lead solder, which was used to join pipes together before the 1990s
- Leaded-brass fixtures, such as faucets and valves



HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE A LEAD SERVICE PIPE?

Customers with lead service pipes will receive a notice from the City identifying that their property has a lead service pipe.

You may be able to see a portion of the service pipe in your basement, near the water meter. Lead pipes are a dull grey colour. If you scrape the surface of the pipe gently, the metal beneath will be shiny and silver.

If you suspect you have a lead service pipe and did not receive a notice, or would like to have a free water test, call 625-2195.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS OF CONSUMING WATER FROM LEAD PIPES?

Lead found in drinking water can pose a significant health risk if too much enters the body.

The population at the highest risk of lead exposure are infants, young children under the age of six, and pregnant women. Lead exposure targets specific areas of the body such as the nervous system, blood system, and the kidneys.

Visit Health Canada's website to learn more about the risks of lead in drinking water.

I HAVE LEAD SERVICE PIPES, NOW WHAT?

For customers with lead service pipes, drinking water filters will be provided in the short term (1 year supply) at no cost, to reduce lead exposure.

FLUSH TO MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY!

Lead gets into the water when it sits still for long periods of time in lead pipes or fixtures. It is important to flush your line to remove the lead contaminants that may have leached into the water. You can do this by taking a shower, flushing the toilet, doing a load of laundry, or running the cold water for 2 minutes.



DO I NEED TO FILTER WATER THAT MAY CONTAIN LEAD FOR COOKING?

You should regularly flush your water prior to using it for cooking. You should also use the filter provided to further reduce lead exposure. In addition, use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula. Boiling water does not remove lead from water.

CAN I BRUSH MY TEETH WITH WATER THAT MAY CONTAIN LEAD?

Yes. But, residents are advised not to swallow the water unless they have flushed their pipes.

IS IT SAFE TO TAKE A BATH OR SHOWER IN WATER THAT MAY CONTAIN LEAD?

Yes. Bathing and showering is safe for you and your children. Lead will not enter the body through the skin or by breathing in vapours while showering or bathing.

GOING FORWARD

The City continues to work with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Thunder Bay District Health Unit to evaluate further methods to reduce lead levels measured at the tap and update the City's Corrosion Control Plan.



LEARN MORE

To learn more about the drinking water changes, visit: www.thunderbay.ca/drinkingwater

To learn more about lead in drinking water, visit: www.thunderbay.ca/leadpipes