

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER**

**Public Water System ID: CO 0159105**

**System Name: Snake River Water District**

The Snake River Water District (SRWD) recently exceeded the lead action level in its drinking water during routine sampling. The EPA has set an action level for lead at 15 parts per billion (ppb) based on the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of all sample results. Our 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for lead was 16.8 ppb or 1.8 parts per billion over the EPA action level. The SRWD collected 20 samples and 3 samples were above the 15 ppb action level. The SRWD is investigating the cause of the high lead results as well as the corrosivity of the water on plumbing materials within our service area. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

Remember that when water is in contact with pipes or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1987 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New homes may also have lead: even “lead-free” plumbing may contain some lead. EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person’s potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water.

## **No Detectable Lead in Water Provided by the Snake River Water District**

Water provided by the (SRWD) was tested on October 25, 2017 and was below the minimum level detectable for lead of 0.5 parts per billion.

While the water supplied by the SRWD does not contain a detectable amount of lead, lead can enter drinking water when water is in contact with pipes or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1987 are more likely to have pipes, fixtures and solder that contain lead. Approximately 43% of the homes/buildings within the SRWD were built before 1987 and consequently present more potential for lead entering drinking water through fixtures and pipes within the home.

## **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. 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. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother’s bones, which may affect brain development.

## **Sources of Lead**

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes).

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free”, may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to eight percent lead to be labeled as “lead free”. However, plumbing fixtures labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified may only have up to two percent lead. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

When water is in contact with pipes or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1988 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New homes may also have lead; even “lead-free” plumbing may contain some lead. EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person’s potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with the lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Don’t forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children’s hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

### **Steps You Can take to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Your Water**

1. ***Flush Your Pipes Before Drinking.*** If it hasn’t been used for several hours, run the cold water tap until it becomes as cold as it will get. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
2. ***Always use cold water for drinking, cooking, and especially for preparing baby formula.*** Hot water is likely to contain higher levels of lead. Boiling water does not remove lead from water.
3. ***The two actions recommended above are very important to the health of your family. They will probably be effective in reducing lead levels because most of the lead in household water comes from the plumbing in your house, not from the local water supply.***
4. Regularly clean your faucets screen (also known as an aerator)
5. ***Consider*** Using a water filter certified to remove lead and know when it’s time to replace the filter, make sure it is certified under Standard 53 by NSF International to remove lead. Contact NSF at 1-800-NSF-8010 or visit [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org). You may also visit the Water Quality Association’s website at [www.wqa.org](http://www.wqa.org).
6. ***Consider testing your water for lead.*** Call us at the number below to find out how to get your water tested for lead. A list of certified laboratories is listed at [www.colorado.gov/cdphe/laboratory-certification-program](http://www.colorado.gov/cdphe/laboratory-certification-program).
7. ***Consider getting your child's blood tested.*** Summit County Public Health Department offers low cost blood lead screenings (\$10), to schedule an appointment call 970-668-9161.
8. ***Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.*** Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead. Brass faucets, fittings and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free,” may leach lead into drinking water. The NSF website at [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) has more information on lead-containing plumbing fixtures. You should use only lead-certified contractors.
9. ***Have a licensed electrician check your wiring.*** If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electric code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. ***DO NOT*** attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards.

### **What happened & What is being done?**

- For the 2017 monitoring year, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) increased the requirements for the Snake River Water District (SRWD) from 10 sample sites every 3 years to 20 sample sites every year.
- The 2017 results from the new sample pool produced three of 20 samples with lead concentration above the EPA action level of 0.015 mg/L with the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile at 0.0168 mg/L. None of the samples exceeded EPA target levels for copper.
- The SRWD is taking the following steps:
  - 1) Distributing public education materials.

- 2) Conducting lead and copper monitoring on a six-month frequency at 40 sample sites beginning January 2018. If you would like to participate in the lead and copper sampling and your home was built before 1987 please contact Ron Mentch at 970-390-6857.
- 3) Performing water quality monitoring no later than November 30, 2017 to include 3 different tap sample sites and 2 entry point sites for pH, temperature, alkalinity, calcium (as CaCO<sub>3</sub>), conductivity, total phosphorus, chloride, sulfate, iron and manganese.
- 4) Lead and copper source water monitoring was performed on October 25, 2017. Lead was below the minimum level detectable of 0.5 parts per billion and the highest copper level was 0.0023 parts per million.
- 5) Submitting an optimal corrosion control treatment recommendation from a professional engineer no later than March 31, 2018.

The Snake River Water District encourages the distribution of this information to all potential affected customers and users of the drinking water system.

**For More Information**

For more information call the Snake River Water District at 970-468-0328

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your health care provider.

**Notice Provided by: The Snake River Water District**

**Date: November 21, 2017 and revised on December 14, 2017**