

## FAQs

### Lead in Drinking Water:

- Who is at risk for lead exposure?
  - Lead is particularly dangerous to children because their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults do and their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead. They are also more susceptible to lead exposure from frequent hand to mouth contact with objects that may contain lead.
  - Adults, especially pregnant women are at risk. Exposure to lead can occur by eating or drinking from dishes, pottery, or glassware containing lead. Exposure can also occur by breathing in lead dust by spending time in areas where lead based paint is deteriorating, and during renovation or repair work that disturbs painted surfaces in older homes and buildings.
- What are the symptoms of lead poisoning?
  - Signs and symptoms of lead poisoning in children include developmental delay, learning difficulties, irritability, loss of appetite, weight loss, sluggishness and fatigue, abdominal pain, vomiting, constipation, hearing loss, and seizures.
  - Signs and symptoms in adults might include high blood pressure, joint and muscle pain, difficulties with memory or concentration, headache, abdominal pain, mood disorders, reduced sperm count and abnormal sperm, miscarriage, stillbirth or premature birth in pregnant women.
- How can lead become an issue within our drinking water system?
  - Lead most commonly affects water systems through corrosion of plumbing materials, such as, water fixtures with shredded threads
- Why is USAG Stuttgart testing for lead in water?
  - Water testing is conducted regularly at Army installations in accordance with federal, state and local standards.
  - In 2013, the Installation Management Command expanded sampling efforts by including sampling for lead at high-risk facilities, which are defined as those providing drinking water to children under age six and pregnant mothers. High-risk facilities include child development centers, youth centers, and schools.
  - The reporting limit for lead found in water above 15 parts per billion (ppb), recommends action to be taken according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- What is USAG Stuttgart doing about lead in drinking water?
  - Testing for lead in drinking water occurs at facilities across USAG Stuttgart within a 5-year cycle, which includes Army family housing areas, child development centers, schools and youth centers.
  - Within the Directorate of Public Works (DPW), housing staff coordinate testing times with housing tenants at government-owned and government-leased housing areas.
  - As part of the sampling efforts DPW has Contractors drop off and pick up a set of three bottles that require the resident to collect. Collection of these samples takes no more than two minutes
  - Sample collection involves the following:
    - In the first bottle, a water sample is collected immediately from faucet.

- In the second bottle, a water sample is collected 30 seconds after the water has run.
    - In the third bottle, a sample is collected two minutes after the water has run.
  - DPW staff will notify residents if higher-than-normal levels of lead are detected and will take immediate corrective measures.
- What can I do to protect myself and my family
  - Always flush your water faucet after extended periods of non-use, usually two minutes is sufficient.
  - Use cold water from the tap for food preparation. Daily activities, such as, washing dishes or hands and showering with warm water is fine.
  - Regularly clean your faucet aerators. Sediment and mineral deposits potentially containing lead and copper from solder or household plumbing can become trapped in faucet aerators. Removing and soaking the aerators in vinegar overnight at least twice a year will dissolve any built-up minerals and sediments.
  - If you detect symptoms of lead poisoning in yourself or your family members or if you suspect you may have taken in unhealthy amounts of lead from a previous location contact your Army Health Clinic or TRICARE network provider immediately. U.S. Army clinics can take a blood test and provide results in about two weeks.
  - More water safety tips are available from the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead).
- How do I know if my house or work place have tested positive for lead?
  - DPW staff will personally notify residents and immediately take corrective measures if they detect higher-than-normal levels of lead in your water.