

# Drinking Water

In March of 2019, Health Canada updated the national standard for lead content in drinking water. Manitoba is working to meet this new guideline, which recommends the lead content of drinking water not exceed 0.005 milligrams per liter (mg/L) in a water sample taken at the tap using the correct protocol.



In response, our facilities and maintenance team will be sampling water fountains and faucets used for drinking/cooking in all buildings to ensure lead levels do not exceed the new guideline. The results will be shared with the community. Where levels of lead are found to be elevated beyond the new guideline, corrective actions will be taken immediately.

## Why is this important?

It's important to assess lead levels in our schools and childcare centres as children are more sensitive to lead exposure due to the effect of lead on the developing brain.

“Lead exposure, even at low levels, has been associated with developmental delays of childhood behaviours, a decrease in language skills, reduced intellectual abilities and delayed puberty,” as stated on the [Public Health Manitoba Fact Sheet](#).

As noted in MASBO (Manitoba Association of School Business Officials) News, drinking water is not generally the most significant source of lead exposure and the amount of lead in natural water sources in Manitoba is very low. However, drinking water can contribute to a person's overall lead exposure. Lead can affect digestive and kidney function, harm blood production and increase blood pressure.

Lead can enter drinking water from various parts of a building's plumbing system, including lead solder, brass fixtures, water fountains, and lead piping. The amount of lead in drinking water depends on how corrosive the water is, the materials used in constructing the plumbing system, and how long the water is in contact with lead in the pipes or fixtures.

## Additional Resources

[Sustainable Development Manitoba: Lead in Drinking Water](#)

[Corrective Actions for Schools, Child Care Centres and Large Buildings](#)

[Health Canada, Drinking Water: What about lead?](#)