

Wisconsin Lead-in-Water Testing and Remediation (WTR) Initiative

An approach to reducing lead in drinking water

What is the Lead-in-WTR Initiative?

The goal of the Wisconsin Lead-in-WTR Initiative is to reduce lead hazards in early child care centers and early Head Start programs across the state. This program tests water at the centers for lead and helps centers take action through faucet replacement and non-potable water signage.



Why is it important to test for lead in water?

Some old plumbing materials and plumbing fixtures like faucets and water fountains may contain lead. Over time, this lead can enter our drinking water and, when consumed, can enter our bloodstream. Unfortunately, infants and young children are especially susceptible to lead exposures such as this.

Children who are exposed to lead can develop:

- Behavior and learning problems.
- Lower IQ and hyperactivity.
- Slowed growth.
- Hearing problems.
- Anemia.
- Speech and language impairment.



Facilities built before 1986 are most likely to have been built with materials that contain lead. Because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in water, testing is the only sure way to tell if there are elevated levels of lead in your drinking water.



How do we get started?

It is important to know that this program is entirely voluntary; it is up to you whether your facility participates or not.



Step 1: Get enrolled

- Contact your local health department (LHD) to learn more about the program and the benefits of participating.
- Contact your licensing specialist to indicate your interest in participating in the program.
- Create a communication plan for center staff and families.



Step 2: Get tested

- Work with your LHD as they gather information and create a unique water sampling plan for your center.
- Coordinate with LHD to test all functioning water outlets in your facility.



Step 3: Take action

- Receive water testing results from your LHD, including any information about problem outlets.
- Stop using impacted faucets. Alternately, post signage to alert staff to not use outlets for drinking or cooking.
- Work with your LDH to hire a plumber and replace any drinking or cooking water outlets that test high for lead.

Helpful Note

If you rent your facility, please keep in touch with your building owner. It is up to the child care facility to communicate with their landlord about their program participation and to share water-testing and remediation updates as they become available. Your local health department will provide a letter for sharing the testing results with the building owner.

Contacts for more information:

- Go to www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties.htm for your local health department's contact information.
- Contact dcfplicbrlsro@wisconsin.gov to locate your licensing specialist.
- Go to www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/clppp-info.htm for more information about childhood lead poisoning and its impacts.