

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Getting the **Lead** out of **DC Drinking Water**



In August, a new treatment will begin to help reduce lead in DC's drinking water. We will monitor the water closely throughout the process. One thing you might see is reddish water. *It's not dangerous.* If you see red water, follow these steps.

Reddish Water in the Short Term

Red water is rusty water. The treatment for lead could free some rust from the pipes, and rust can make the water look red or brown.



If You See "Red Water":

DO NOT drink or cook with it.



RUN the **COLD** water until it is clear.



If the water is not clear in 10 minutes, **TURN OFF** the tap for 30 minutes. **RUN** the **COLD** water for 10 more minutes.



If the water is clear, it is **OK** to drink and cook with it.

If the water is still not clear, call WASA's 24-hour emergency services line at 202/612-3400.

WASA's
24-hour emergency
services line:
202/612-3400



DO NOT use **HOT** water until the **COLD** water runs clear – rust can sit in your hot water heater.

DO NOT wash laundry until the water runs clear – "red water" can stain your clothes

For people with iron-related problems, such as hemochromatosis, extra iron could be a problem. Talk to your doctor.

Continue to Reduce Lead in Your Water

It may take up to **6 months or longer** for the treatment to start working. We will keep you informed. In the meantime,

Homes with Lead Service Lines should:

- **ALWAYS** run the water for 10 minutes before drinking or cooking with it. *Showering or washing clothes counts, but you should then flush the kitchen faucet for 60 seconds.*
- Use that same faucet to store some clear water in your refrigerator.
- Pregnant and nursing women and children under 6 should only drink filtered tap water. Flush the water for 10 minutes before using your home filter.

All Homes should:

- Run the tap for 60 seconds before drinking or cooking with water.
- Use only **COLD** water for drinking or cooking.
- Remove and clean the screen on your faucet regularly.
- Boiling water will not remove lead!

For more information:

U.S. EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline	800/426-4791
D.C. Water and Sewer Authority	202/787-2732
D.C. Department of Health	202/671-0733
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	
Washington Aqueduct	202/764-2753

