



Water quality information

## Lead pipes in your home

Water coming from our treatment works does not contain lead. However, many properties still have old lead plumbing and lead pipes supplying the water into the house.

This leaflet will provide you with information on:

- Where lead comes from
- Why lead can be a problem
- Where we sample and what we find
- What Portsmouth Water are doing about lead
- What to do if you think you have lead pipes



## Where lead comes from

Water at its source and in mains is virtually lead-free. Lead used to be common in the environment due to its historic use in petrol, paint and water pipes. The use of lead water pipes was phased out during the 1960s and officially became illegal in 1969. Modern underground water pipes are made of blue plastic.

Many properties still have lead plumbing and lead water pipes supplying the water into the house. Lead can get into the water when it lies in these lead pipes for some time (e.g. overnight).

## Why lead can be a problem

It is very unlikely that the general population will be exposed to levels of lead high enough to cause adverse health effects. However, exposure to significant quantities of lead can be harmful to health, especially for unborn babies and young children. For this reason it is important that lead levels in drinking water are kept down to the lowest levels.

## Where we sample and what we find

Water is sampled regularly at our treatment works, reservoirs and customer taps and more than 99% of all the samples meet the strict drinking water regulations. Lead is included in these checks and only a small number fail the limit for lead – 5 in the last 5 years all at customers' taps.



## What Portsmouth Water are doing about lead

The water in our area is hard water and scale forms on the inside of pipes, which helps to reduce the lead from dissolving into the water.

Our water is treated at our treatment works and this helps to form a protective barrier inside lead pipes; this reduces the amount of lead that dissolves into the water supply.

Pipes under the road or pavements up to the boundary of your property are usually our responsibility. When we are replacing old water mains in the road we replace any lead service pipes found.

The pipe from the property boundary up to and including the internal plumbing is normally the responsibility of the property owner. If you have any lead pipework between the stop valve outside your home and your kitchen tap, the best solution is to replace it using an approved contractor. You can find one via the following link:

[www.wras.co.uk/consumers/approvedplumberscheme/](http://www.wras.co.uk/consumers/approvedplumberscheme/)

If you do this, you can ask us to replace our part of the service pipe between the water main in the street and the stop valve. We do this **FREE** of charge.



## What to do if you think you have lead pipes

### CHECK LIST

- I think I may have lead pipework in my property or underground
- My house was built before 1970 and the pipework has not been replaced
- My pipework is dull grey or black, or has a swollen joint



### Contact us...

If you think you may have lead pipes in your home please contact us and we will test your supply **FREE** of charge.

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