Important Information about Lead in the Westfield Central School District's Drinking Water

On September 6, 2016, the Governor signed into law legislation requiring all public schools in the state to test their drinking water fixtures for lead. Stohl Environmental Consultants sampled our water fixtures on September 27, 2016. As a result of capital project work, some bathroom hand washing basin water samples were taken on November 1, 2016. We received our water testing report on Thursday, January 19, 2017. Stohl sampled all required drinking fountains, sinks, and other water fixtures and found that some of them contained elevated levels of lead. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. This report provides information about lead, our test results, and what we are doing to reduce lead in our drinking water.

Background

These new regulations require all water fixtures on school property that could be used for drinking and cooking to be sampled for lead. The first round of samples was required to be collected in September and October 2016. Future samples must be collected every five years starting in 2020. If samples from fixtures contain lead above a certain level, referred to as the "Action Level," then we must take measures to reduce lead in those fixtures. The action level for lead is set by the NYSDOH at 15 parts per billion (ppb).

Sources of Lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics.

Water in contact with copper plumbing with lead soldered joints or brass fixtures can leach lead out of the plumbing. The use of lead solder in plumbing was banned by EPA in 1987 and in 2014 EPA reduced the amount of lead that plumbing fixtures can contain from 8% to less than 1%.

EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Health Effects of Lead

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of the body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Low levels of lead can also affect adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure. Lead is stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

Water Sample Results

In all, we sampled 224 drinking and water fixtures, from our K-12 building, bus garage, and Wayside building for lead, and found that 17 samples exceeded the Action Level of 15 ppb. Following this letter, is a complete list of samples that exceeded the action. Samples are required to be collected after the water has been motionless in the pipes for at least eight hours. These "first draw" water samples represent worst case condition because when the water is motionless it can leach lead out of the pipes and fixtures. The longer the water sits motionless in the plumbing, the higher the likelihood for lead leaching. Once water begins to flow through the pipes and fixtures, lead levels drop. Please note that all schools have had samples that exceeded the Action Level, especially at fixtures that are not routinely used.

Please note that of the 17 samples that exceeded the action level, 4 samples were taken in areas that did not require testing and do not require remediation. All but 1 sample is from a water source other than a drinking fountain. No water sources in the cafeteria exceeded the Action Level of 15 ppb.

What is Being Done?

The following steps have been taken to reduce lead exposure from drinking water in fixtures that exceeded the Action Level:

1. If the fixture was a drinking fountain, a bubbler, or office sink then it was turned off immediately.
2. If the fixture was a bathroom sink then signs were posted that the water should not be used for drinking.
3. If the fixture was a classroom sink or lab sink not used for drinking water such as in science labs, then signs were posted that the water should not be used for drinking.
4. If the fixture was a custodial sink or other sink not used for drinking water, then signs were posted that the water should not be used for drinking.

Further testing will be conducted on drinking water fixtures to determine if the source of lead is from the plumbing or from the fixture itself. If it is found to be from the fixture, then it will be scheduled for replacement and retested. If it is found to be from the plumbing, consideration will be given to replacing the pipes with plastic or another approved materials depending on the amount of work and cost involved.

All 17 water fixtures that exceeded the 15 ppb action level have either been shut off or had signage posted that the water is not for consumption as required by the New York State Departments of Health and Education.

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Exposure to Lead

1. ***Run your water to flush out lead.*** Run water for 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours; this flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
2. ***Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.*** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
3. ***Do not boil water to remove lead.*** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
4. Don't forget about other sources of lead including lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

Should your child be tested for lead?

New York Public Health Law requires primary health care providers to screen each child for blood lead levels at one and two years of age. In addition, at each routine well-child visit, or at least annually if a child has not had routine well-child visits, primary health care providers assess each child who is at least six-months of age, but under six years of age, for high lead exposure. Children found to be at risk for high lead are screened or referred for lead screening.

If your child has not had routine well-child visits since the age of one year and you are concerned about lead exposure to your child, contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead.

For More Information

Call Lou Golando, Director of Facilities, at (716) 326-2151, extension 330, or visit our website at www.wacs.wnyric.org. We will keep parents, students, and staff informed about the progress we make to reduce the lead in our drinking water by posting updates on our website and in our newsletters. For more information on lead in drinking water, contact the Chautauqua County Department of Health and Human Services at 716-753-4481 or the New York State Department of Health at (518) 402-7650, or by email at bpwsp@health.state.ny.us. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead, or call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD.

Sincerely,

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Listing of Outlets Requiring Remediation

Locations of Outlets Analyzed above the NYS Action Level of 15 parts per billion based upon Analysis of First Draw Samples and Confirmatory Samples				
Sample #	Sample Type	Classroom or other Location	Fixture/Outlet type	Laboratory Analysis in ppb
122.1-17	First Draw	P-9	Sink	25.3
122.1-20	First Draw	P-1, Right Sink, Room 170 Men's Room	Sink	19.2
122.1-21	First Draw	P-4, Left Sink, Room 171 Women's Room	Sink	294
122.1-29	First Draw	MS-1, Room 126	Sink	168
122.1-36	First Draw	MS-9, Sink on Island, Room 136	Sink	16.5
122.1-38	First Draw	MS-11, Left Sink Yellow Tint, Women's Room	Sink	1970
122.1-40	First Draw	MS-12, Restroom		15.4
122.1-42	First Draw	MS-15, Sink on Island, Room 137	Sink	23.5
122.1-63	First Draw	T-5R, Right Faucet Yellow Tint, Weight Room	Sink	38.0
122.1-64	First Draw	T-5C, Center Faucet Yellow Tint, Weight Room	Sink	43.1
122.1-81	First Draw	H-10, Right Sink, Room 226	Sink	22.4
122.1-84	First Draw	H-11, Left Wall Sink, Room 226	Sink	15.3
122.1-85	First Draw	H-12, Left Room, Room 226	Sink	20.7
122.1-95	First Draw	H-26, Island Sink, Room 252	Sink	52.6
122.1-123	First Draw	E2-20D, Room 208	Bubbler	16.7
122.1-163	First Draw	E1-30, Room 111	Sink	24.2
122.1-172	First Draw	E-138, Room 114	Sink	23.5