

## **LEAD AND COPPER RULE: LEAD PUBLIC EDUCATION**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER**

*The Great Salt Bay Sanitary District has found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your 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 your 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. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. 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.*

### **SOURCES OF LEAD**

Lead can be found in many places. Knowing where lead is can help limit your contact with it. Though most cases of lead poisoning in Maine were a result of lead paint dust, you can be exposed to lead through drinking and cooking with water that has lead. Lead can dissolve into water from lead solder or brass faucets, fittings, and valves in your home. Lead can also come from jobs and hobbies that work with lead or lead paint as well as from things you buy such as toys and antiques.

### **STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

- 1) Run the water for at least 15 seconds or until it becomes noticeably colder before using it for drinking or cooking. The longer water sits in piping the more lead it may contain.
- 2) Use cold water for drinking and cooking, as well as for preparing baby formula. Hot water dissolves lead more quickly than cold water.
- 3) Boiling the water does not reduce lead levels.
- 4) Consider using bottled water for drinking and cooking.
- 5) If you are concerned about lead, contact your health care provider or the Maine Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (866-292-3474). You can ask about having you or your child tested for lead.
- 6) Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead. Brass faucets, fittings and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free", may contribute to lead in drinking water.

### **HOW LEAD GOT INTO YOUR WATER**

The most likely reason lead is in your water is because it dissolved from lead solder or out of brass plumbing materials such as faucets, fittings, and valves that are in your residence or business. The Great Salt Bay Sanitary District is currently taking the following steps to try to reduce lead levels: We are evaluating the corrosion control program with the help of an engineering firm. The corrosion control program which includes adding soda ash and sodium silicate to the water. These chemicals raise the PH of the water which makes the water less acidic. With the water being less acidic it makes it less likely to leach lead from your pipes, faucets and fittings

### **TO FIND OUT MORE**

If you have questions, call us at (207)563-5105 or visit our website [www.gsbsd.org](http://www.gsbsd.org)

*For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/lead>, or contact your health care provider.*

### **TESTING YOUR WATER**

To find out how you can get your water tested for lead, contact the District at 563-5105

### **LEAD IN PLUMBING MATERIALS**

Some plumbing materials including solder and brass fixtures may contain lead. If you want to make changes to your plumbing, it is important to know that "lead-free" materials are allowed to have up to 0.2% lead (solder) or up to 0.25% lead (piping/fixtures). Some newer products, including those labeled for sale in California and Vermont, may contain much lower levels of lead. Older products (fixtures/piping) labelled "lead-free" could contain up to 8% lead