



Steps to Reduce the Risk of Lead in your Water: *Flush the taps!*

Flushing taps that are connected to lead service lines and/or lead plumbing in the home is a proven method of reducing risks posed by lead in water.

Both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Milwaukee Water Works (MWW) recommend flushing.

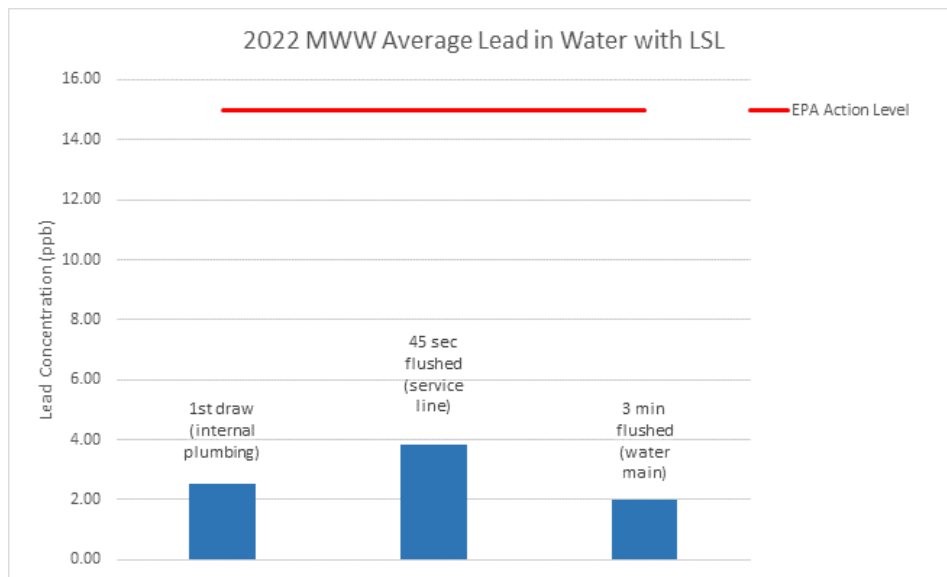
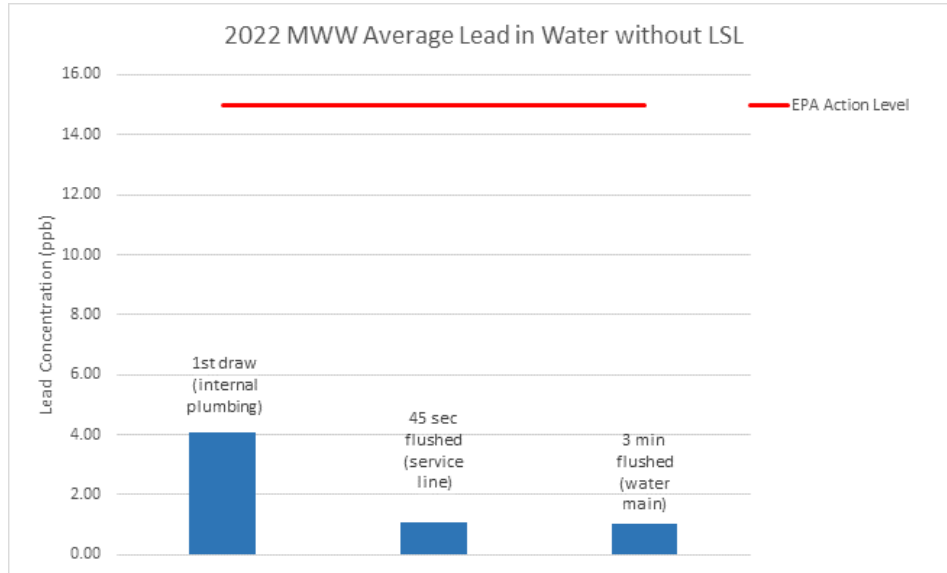
Under the heading "Important Steps You Can Take to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water", the EPA's web site [states](#): "Run your water. Before drinking, flush your home's pipes by running the tap, taking a shower, doing laundry, or doing a load of dishes. The amount of time to run the water will depend on whether your home has a lead service line or not, and the length of the lead service line. Residents should contact their water utility for recommendations about flushing times in their community."

Three times a year, Milwaukee Water Works mails important information to customers about reducing risks posed to residents by lead in water. Those educational materials include the following recommendations:

- Drink/cook only with water from the cold tap.
- Run the cold tap for three minutes before using.
- Regularly unscrew/rinse the screen inside the faucet
- During street, sewer, or water main construction within one block of your home, flush household plumbing at the end of the construction workday.

Milwaukee Water Works provided testing kits to over 150 homes in 2022 to test lead in water. MWW instructed to customers to collect the "first draw" sample after water had remained motionless in the pipes for at least six hours. Per the instructions, customers were told to collect the second bottle 45 seconds later, which is approximately when the water from the service line reaches the tap. Milwaukee Water Works instructed customers to fill the third bottle three minutes after the first draw sample, collecting fresh water from the water main. After three minutes of flushing, the average lead concentration was lower, whether or not the home is connected to a lead service line.

After water has not been used in a home for six hours or more, MWW advises customers with lead services flush the cold water tap for three minutes before drinking or cooking with water.



While flushing is most helpful after water has been sitting still in a lead service line for 6 or more hours, MWW encourages regular flushing out of an abundance of caution and to encourage residents to adopt this practical habit for reducing lead risks. There is no science that indicates flushing increases lead in water.

MWW further recommends that women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, bottle-fed infants, and children under six years of age should only consume water that has been filtered by an NSF-53 certified filter.

Lead levels in our source water, Lake Michigan, are below one part per billion (ppb). Lead levels in the water in MWW's distribution system are similar. MWW's most recent Lead & Copper Rule testing showed the 90th percentile of lead levels in water were about 6ppb for homes with lead service lines. The EPA's action level for lead is 15ppb. (The EPA allows bottled water to contain up to 5ppb of lead.)