

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Public Water System ID: CO0146676

System Name: Town of Ridgway

Our system found elevated levels of lead in the 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

Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney or nervous system problems.

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 and 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. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes).

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free”, may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to eight percent lead to be labeled as “lead free”. However, plumbing fixtures labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified may only have up to two percent lead. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

When water is in contact with pipes or plumbing that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New homes may also have lead; even “lead-free” plumbing may contain some lead. 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 the lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Don’t forget about other sources of lead such as 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.

Steps You Can take to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Your Water

1. ***Run your water to flush out lead.*** If it hasn't been used for several hours, run the cold water tap until the temperature is noticeably colder. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes. To conserve water, remember to catch the flushed tap water for plants or some other household use (e.g. cleaning).
2. ***Always use cold water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula.*** Never cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Never use water from the hot water tap to make formula.
3. ***Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.***
4. ***Periodically remove and clean the faucet's strainer/aerator.*** While removed, run the water to remove debris.
5. ***You may consider investing in a home water treatment device or alternative water source.*** When purchasing a water treatment device, make sure it is certified under Standard 53 by NSF International to remove lead. Contact NSF at 1-800-NSF-8010 or visit www.nsf.org. You may also visit the Water Quality Association's website at www.wqa.org.
6. ***Test your water for lead.*** Call us at the number below to find out how to get your water tested for lead. A list of certified laboratories is listed at www.colorado.gov/cdphe/laboratory-certification-program.
7. ***Get your child's blood tested.*** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.
8. ***Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.*** Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead. Brass faucets, fittings and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may leach lead into drinking water. The NSF website at www.nsf.org has more information on lead-containing plumbing fixtures. You should use only lead-certified contractors.
9. ***Have a licensed electrician check your wiring.*** If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electric code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. ***DO NOT*** attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards.

What happened & What is being done?

As required by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Water Quality Control Division (WQCD), in June 2025 we collected 20 samples and analyzed them for lead. The Town relies on various property owners, as required by WQCD, to assist with sampling efforts. The results of more than 10 percent of our samples exceeded the action level for lead. Our 90th percentile compliance value was 15.8 ppb, just above the 15 ppb lead action level.

We are focused on protecting the health of every household in our community. It's worth noting that lead from service lines and lead plumbing and fixtures are potential sources of lead in drinking water. Lead from service lines and lead plumbing and fixtures can dissolve or break off into water and end up at the faucet. This does not mean that every property that receives drinking water from us has lead in the drinking water. It does mean that you should understand how to reduce your exposure to lead through water. Keep in mind that drinking water is not the only potential source of lead exposure, since lead can be found in air, soil, and paint. For more information on all sources of lead, visit <https://www.epa.gov/lead>.

The Town is worked closely with WQCD to complete the required public noticing, lead public education, and treatment adjustment requirements as a result of this action level exceedance. The Town will conduct additional sampling to confirm that there is not a system-wide issue that led to this action level exceedance.

We are working to determine which corrosion control treatment strategy would be most effective in addressing this situation. The Town will work closely with WQCD representatives to implement any decided strategies by the required timeframe for implementation.

For More Information

For more information call us at 970-318-0081 or visit our website at <https://townofridgway.colorado.gov>.

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

Notice Provided by: Town of Ridgway, Colorado

Date: 8/27/2025