

# GREENWorks

## Ideas for a Cleaner Environment

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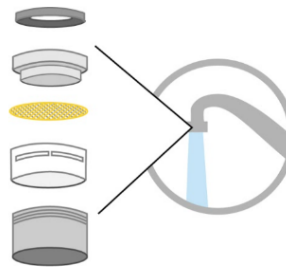
### Protect Your Tap: Tips to Reduce Lead Exposure in Drinking Water

Lead in drinking water is an important public health matter in communities across the country and New Hampshire. There are no safe levels of lead: Even low levels in the blood can result in harm to the health and development of children and unborn babies. In some cases, lead can enter drinking water through pipes that are called “lead service lines,” and can also be found in plumbing materials including piping, solder or faucets. Even if your service lines are not lead pipes, there can still be lead present in your drinking water. These tips can help you reduce lead exposure in your drinking water:

- **Flush your plumbing before using the water for drinking and cooking.** Running cold water from the tap for one to two minutes is sufficient. However, for known lead lines, run at high volume tap for five or more minutes. The routine of letting water run should be done each morning or if the water has not been used for six hours. To conserve water, fill up multiple containers after flushing the plumbing and store them in the fridge.

- **Only use cold water for drinking, cooking and making baby food and formula.** If you need hot water, draw cold water from the tap after running it and then heat it up. Hot tap water can dissolve lead more easily and is likely to have higher lead levels. Furthermore, boiling water does not reduce or remove lead. Bathing and showering is safe for you and children, even if there is lead in the water.

- **Regularly clean your faucet’s screen** (also known as an aerator) once a month. The graphic shown demonstrates how to clean your aerator.



- 1** Unscrew the end piece of your faucet where the water comes out. This is the aerator.
- 2** Remove the screen and rinse out debris.
- 3** Assemble and screw it back on.

- **Consider using a water filter pitcher or home filtration system that is certified to remove lead.** Look for products certified by NSF/ANSI under Standard 53 for removal of lead and follow any manufacturer’s guidelines on installation and maintenance of the product. Devices that are not certified to remove lead will not work.

Even if you know your service line is not lead, lead could be present in buried piping, faucets or solder. Testing your home's drinking water is the only way to confirm if lead is present. Samples should be submitted to an [accredited laboratory](#) for analysis. Carefully follow the directions of the accredited laboratory for taking a stagnant water sample from faucets where you drink.

However, there are other ways to identify lead pipes in your home. The US Environmental Protection Agency and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services created the [Protect Your Tap: 10-minute lead test](#), an online guide that walks you through a series of steps to see if you have lead pipes bringing water into your home, how to reduce your lead exposure and how to get your water tested. For more tips on reducing lead exposure in drinking water, check out the [Protect Your Tap video](#).

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