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Lead in School Drinking Water
Provider Guidance: Children Ages 6 and Older

With increased testing of drinking water in school and daycare facilities across New Hampshire, healthcare providers may be contacted by parents/guardians with questions regarding possible health effects of lead in water and testing their children for lead elevations.

While lead in drinking water is a source of concern and can increase a child's overall lead burden, leading to harmful health effects, **lead-based paint chips and dust remain the most significant exposure to lead for young children under the age of 6 years old.**

In children less than six years old, lead crosses the immature blood brain barrier and causes neurotoxicity. However, lead is also absorbed by bone and soft tissue and long term exposure can be harmful to older children, as well as adults.

In New Hampshire, lead screening legally is required for children at 1 and 2 years old. For children older than 6 years old, attending schools with drinking water sources that have test results exceeding the New Hampshire maximum limit of 5 parts-per-billion ($\mu\text{g/L}$), please see the guidance below:

- Before drinking from any water outlet, let the water run for one minute.
- Schools should clearly identify water outlets with lead 5 parts per billion or higher as non-potable.
- Provide the child with bottled water to drink while in school.
- Consider drawing a venous blood lead level at the request of parent/guardian.
- Direct parents/guardians to <https://www.des.nh.gov/water/drinking-water/lead/schools-and-child-care-programs/view-results> to review school system water testing results.
- Direct parents/guardians to <https://www.des.nh.gov/water/drinking-water/lead/schools-and-child-care-programs/communicate-and-take-action> to review corrective actions that schools are required to take.

For additional guidance or questions, call 1-800-897-LEAD (5323) or email LeadRN@dhhs.nh.gov