

# More Information for Families

## Annual Drinking Water Tests

Cambridge is fortunate to have very healthy drinking water. To maintain water quality in our schools, CPS works with the Cambridge Water Department to test drinking water samples from all schools on an annual basis. All results can be found on the CPS facilities webpage.

In the past seven years of testing, **zero** samples exceeded the “action threshold” set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): 15 parts per billion (15 micrograms per liter or .015 milligrams per liter). This means that the water in our schools is overall very good.

## New Comprehensive Testing

Increasing awareness of these issues has caused us to take a closer look to ensure that every single CPS faucet and tap produces water that meets EPA standards. More comprehensive testing has uncovered taps where lead levels are above the action level. This is most likely caused by older hardware. In some cases, the problem could be a pipe inside the wall.

## Action Plan

1. Shut off and replace all taps that test above 15 parts per billion.
2. Follow-up tests to establish that the source of lead has been removed.
3. Ongoing testing to prevent lead from reaching unsafe levels.

## About Lead Testing

Lead is toxic. In Cambridge lead paint inside and around buildings can become dust. This environmental hazard is the primary reason that Massachusetts requires lead testing for young children. The greatest concern is lead exposure by children under age 6 and women who are or may become pregnant.

Cambridge is fortunate to have a very safe water system. It's reassuring to remember that our sources

of water vary throughout the day and week—which limits exposure from any individual tap.

Please also note that running a faucet for 1-2 minutes flushes out the pipes, making the water much cleaner. This is why testing is performed first thing in the morning, when the highest possible level of lead can be detected. Most people allow water to run before drinking from a tap, and take turns filling their water bottles, limiting exposure by any individual.

## What Families Can Do

If you have any concerns, your family healthcare provider is the best person to help you decide whether blood testing for lead is advisable for your child.

The Cambridge Public Health Department is also available to answer your questions about lead. Please do not hesitate to contact Alicia Morris, RN at 617.665.3831 for more information.

## Cambridge Water is Safe to Drink

In conducting comprehensive testing at all taps, CPS is underlining our commitment to environmental sustainability and health. Water provides mineral nutrients and many health benefits. Drinking tap water reduces the use of plastic bottles that can damage the environment. Cambridge Water Department has ongoing programs to remove pipes and hardware that contain lead—making our water even safer.

## Learn More

### Cambridge Public Schools - Water Testing

[www.cpsd.us/Departments/facilities](http://www.cpsd.us/Departments/facilities)  
water@cpsd.us | 617. 349.6516

### Public Health Department - Lead Safe Kids

[www.cambridgepublichealth.org/services/childrens-health/](http://www.cambridgepublichealth.org/services/childrens-health/)

### Water Department

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/Water>



Cambridge Public Schools

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