



A Parent's Guide to **Safe Drinking Water at Home**





Fresh Water is BEST!

With children studying from home, it is very important to ensure that they have access to safe drinking water. Here are some tips to help you learn about possible strategies to ensure the water you are providing to your children is safe.



≡ Where Does Your Water Come From?

The water provided by a public water system is collected from waterbodies (lakes, ponds, rivers) or underground wells, treat it to remove any contaminants, and then pump it through a system of pipes to arrive at your house.

Although the public water supplier tests the water, certain contaminants like lead and copper can enter your water through your home's plumbing that contains these metals. Learn more about it in the following slide!



Please note that if your water is provided by your private well, there is no state requirement to have your well water tested (although there may be from your local Board of Health). MassDEP recommends all homeowners with private wells to test their water, and use a state certified laboratory.

For more information see: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/protect-your-family-a-guide-to-water-quality-testing-for-private-wells>





Do you know about Lead in Drinking Water?



- Lead is a toxic metal that can be harmful to human health even at low exposure levels. Young children, infants, and developing fetuses are most likely to be harmed by lead.
- Lead rarely occurs in drinking water as it leaves the treatment plant/well.
- Lead can enter drinking water when plumbing materials that contain lead corrode, especially where the water has high acidity or low mineral content that corrodes pipes and fixtures. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures that are found in households. **Homes built prior to 1986 are more likely to contain lead.** Therefore, it is really important that you check your household for possible lead plumbing materials.





Do you know if your house has lead pipes?

1. learn to identify lead-plumbing materials by following this link: <https://apps.npr.org/find-lead-pipes-in-your-home/en/#intro>.
2. Ask your local water department if there are lead service lines leading to your home. For a list of public water systems see <https://www.mass.gov/media/831461/>
3. If you identify any lead-plumbing materials, please contact program.director-dwp@mass.gov for further guidance.

In the meantime see our next slide with steps to mitigate lead in drinking water.



≡ Reducing Lead in Drinking Water

01 Run tap water until after the water feels cold. Then fill a clean fresh pitcher with fresh water and place in the refrigerator for future use.

02 Always use water from the cold water tap for drinking, food and hot beverage preparation. Hot water will dissolve lead more quickly than cold water and may contain increased lead levels.
Remember to not use hot water when making baby formula or food for infants.

03 Call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (1-800-532-9571) for health information, or visit their website at
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-public-health>.



☰ What About Other Contaminants?

Homeowners with private wells:

Please remember to test your water often! Also, be aware of the emerging contaminant named PFAS.

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals used in a variety of consumer products and industries throughout the world.

Private drinking water can be a significant source of exposure at locations where these chemicals have contaminated water supplies. If your well is located within one to two miles of a known source of PFAS or of other water supplies where PFAS has been detected, you may wish to consider sampling your water source. For more information see:

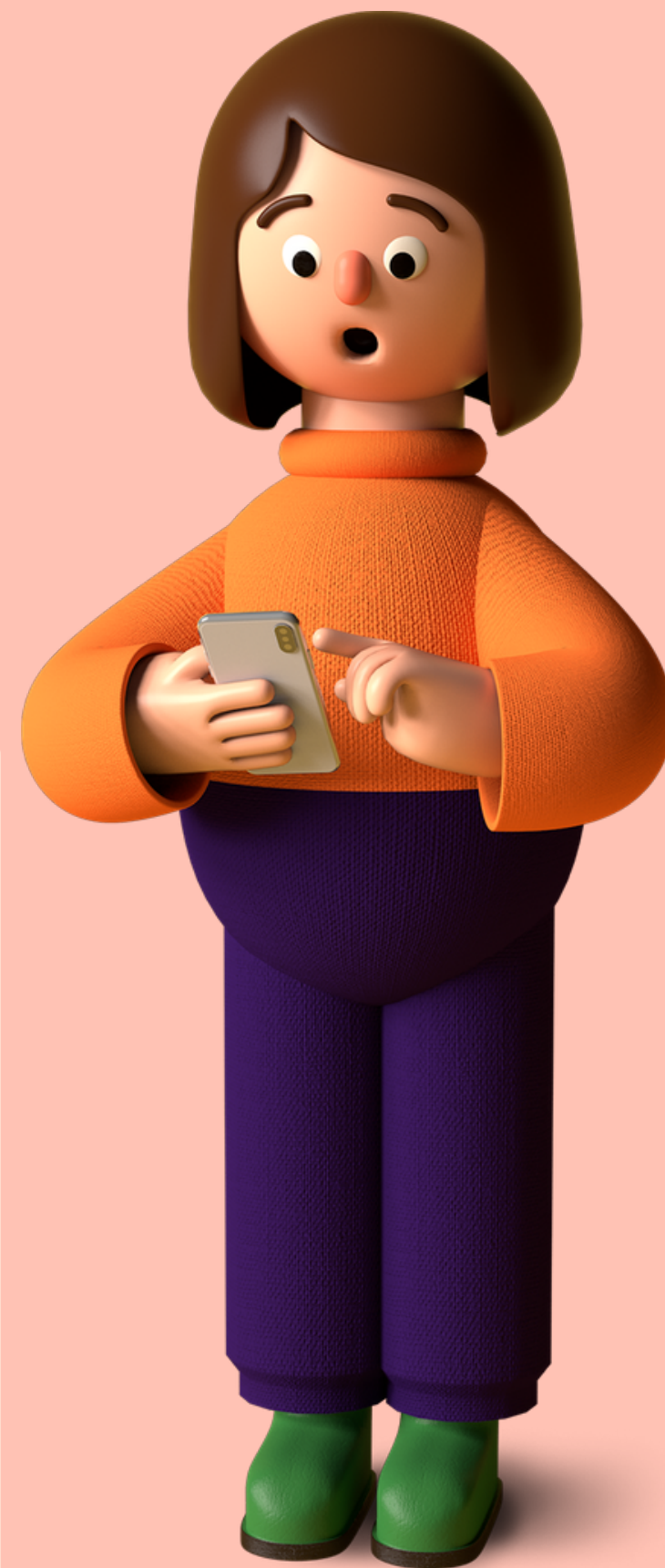
https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-private-well-drinking-water-supplies-faq#what-are-pfas?_

Households connected to a PWS:

Remember that if your water is provided by a public water supplier they are mandated to test for contaminants such as bacteria by MassDEP.

You can always check the Consumer Confidence Report of your local water department to see all the contaminants tested at

<https://ofmpub.epa.gov/apex/safewater/f?p=136:102>





Remember To...

- Always use fresh, cold, running water for drinking and cooking.
- Always buy plumbing fixtures that have zero- or low-lead levels.
- Get your water tested using a MassDEP certified lab.





How to Get your Water Tested?

Laboratories can test your water. In most cases, the laboratory can arrange to collect your water samples.

MassDEP recommends using a state certified laboratory.

For a list of MassDEP certified laboratories see labs:

<https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/DEP/Labcert/Labcert.aspx>

