

A NOTICE TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND STAFF
SOUTHGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Lead Testing of School Drinking Water - January 22, 2025

Safe and healthy school environments can foster healthy and successful children. To protect public health, the Public Health Law and New York State Health Department (NYSDOH) regulations require that all public schools and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) test lead levels in water from every outlet that is being used, or could potentially be used, for drinking or cooking. If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 5 parts per billion (ppb), which is equal to 5 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$), the NYSDOH requires that the school take action to reduce the exposure to lead.

Of the locations that tested as actionable, six of the eight are below drinking water standards for public water systems which are allowed 15 ppb. Schools are held to a higher level with drinking water. Again, our current actionable level for lead is 5 ppb. This is a lower requirement than past testing cycles. Our current actionable level is a more stringent testing level than the drinking water standards. All results will be posted on our website.

What is “first draw” testing of school drinking water for lead?

The “on-again, off-again” nature of water use at most schools can raise lead levels in school drinking water. Water that remains in pipes overnight, over a weekend, or over vacation periods stays in contact with lead pipes or lead solder and, as a result, could contain higher levels of lead. This is why schools are required to collect a sample after the water has been sitting in the plumbing system for a certain period of time. This “first draw” sample is likely to show higher levels of lead for that outlet than what you would see if you sampled after using the water continuously. However, even if the first draw sample does not reflect what you would see with continuous usage, it is still important because it can identify outlets that have elevated lead levels.

What are the results of the first draw testing?

The District tested 98 water outlets throughout the campus. Of the 98 outlets tested on January 8, 2025, there were 8 above the actionable level of 5 ppb.

2023-2025 Lead Water Testing _____				DATE:
Southgate				1/8/2025
Sample #	Location	Time	Result Pb	Acceptable range Pb
SG-31	Room 5 Bath	448	6.4	≤ 5
SG-44	Room 12 OLD FTN	506	23.4	≤ 5
SG-80	room 23 sink	544	7.5	≤ 5
SG-81	room 24 sink	546	7.3	≤ 5
SG-89	room 30 sink	556	15.6	≤ 5
SG-90	room 30 bubbler	556	6.7	≤ 5
SG-91A	rm 31 porc bub	559	9.8	≤ 5
SG-92	room 32 sink	601	10.3	≤ 5

For a complete listing of test results at Southgate, please go to:
<https://www.northcolonie.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Southgate-for-website.pdf>

What is being done in response to the results?

All eight water outlets above the actionable level at Southgate have been turned off until corrective action can be taken, unless an outlet is a sink faucet needed for handwashing. In that case, a sign was posted at the outlet indicating that the sink is not to be used for drinking. Outlets that tested below the actionable level remain in service with no restrictions.

What are the health effects of lead?

Lead is a metal that can harm children and adults when it gets into their bodies. Lead is a known neurotoxin, particularly harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of children under six years old. Lead can harm a young child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. Lead exposure during pregnancy may contribute to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. There are many sources of lead exposure in the environment, and it is important to reduce all lead exposures as much as possible. Water testing helps identify and correct possible sources of lead that contribute to exposure from drinking water.

What are the other sources of lead exposure?

Lead is a metal that has been used for centuries for many purposes, resulting in widespread distribution in the environment. Major sources of lead exposure include lead-based paint in older housing, and lead that built up over decades in soil and dust due to historical use of lead in gasoline, paint, and manufacturing. Lead can also be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, foods, plumbing materials, and cosmetics. Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies, but drinking water could become a possible source of lead exposure if the building's plumbing contains lead. The primary source of lead exposure for most children with elevated blood-lead levels is lead-based paint.

Should your child be tested for lead?

The risk to an individual child from past exposure to elevated lead in drinking water depends on many factors including but not limited to a child's age, weight, amount of water consumed, and the amount of lead in the water. Children may also be exposed to other significant sources of lead including paint, soil and dust. Since blood lead testing is the only way to determine a child's blood lead level, parents should discuss their child's health history with their child's physician to determine if blood lead testing is appropriate. Pregnant women or women of childbearing age should also consider discussing this matter with their physician.

Additional Resources

For more information regarding the testing program or sampling results, contact Brian Craft at (518) 785-5771 or go to our school website: <https://www.northcolonie.org/district-services/facilities/>.

For information about lead in school drinking water, go to:

https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htm

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/LeadTestinginSchoolDrinkingWater.html>

For information about NYS Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, go to:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

For more information on blood lead testing and ways to reduce your child's risk of exposure to lead, see "What Your Child's Blood Lead Test Means":

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2526/> (available in ten languages).