



# INDOOR WATER



Indoor water is the water you and your family use in your home for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and laundry. Lead, copper, arsenic and pesticides can cause indoor water to become harmful to you and your family's health.

## LEAD

- ▶ **What is lead?**
  - It is a heavy metal that has been taken out of the earth and used in brass, water pipes and solder that comes in contact with water.
- ▶ **How is lead harmful in your indoor water?**
  - Lead acts like a poison when it gets inside your body. It does not allow calcium to work as it should in your body.
- ▶ **What happens if someone drinks water that contains lead**
  - It can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys
  - Infants and young children are more at risk of having Elevated Blood Lead levels (above 10µg/dL)
  - The National Primary Drinking Water Regulations set an upper limit of 15ppm (parts per billion) for lead in drinking water.
- ▶ **How can lead get into my water?**
  - Through lead pipes in your home ● Brass faucets ● Lead solder used to join copper pipes
- ▶ **What can you do to keep your indoor water lead free?**
  - Cook with and drink only cold water from your facet
  - Don't drink the first water out of your tap in the morning. Let it run at least two minutes.
- ▶ **Did you know?**
  - Water filters can get rid of lead, but they need to be changed as recommended to work well.

## COPPER

- ▶ **What is copper?**
  - It is a metal found in rocks, soil, water and air and is widely used in household plumbing
- ▶ **How is copper harmful in your indoor water?**
  - Copper may cause some health problems when it is above 15ppb (parts per billion) in water.
  - Persons with Wilson's disease may be at higher risk of having harmful health effects from copper
- ▶ **What happens if someone drinks water that contains copper?**
  - Stomach problems ● Liver or kidney damage ● Anemia
- ▶ **How can copper get into my water?**
  - When household copper pipes (reddish-brown in color) dissolve, copper gets into the tap water
- ▶ **What can you do to keep your indoor water free of copper**
  - Let the water run until you feel a temperature change to flush out dissolved copper
- ▶ **Did you know?**
  - You can call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800) 426-4791 for information on your indoor water



# INDOOR WATER



## ARSENIC

- ▶ **What is arsenic?**
  - It occurs naturally in rocks, soil, water, air, plants and animals
- ▶ **How can arsenic get into my water?**
  - natural deposits in the earth ● industrial and agricultural pollution
- ▶ **How is arsenic harmful to your indoor water?**
  - It may contaminate the water and cause serious health problems
  - The new arsenic standard for drinking water is 10 ppb (per billion parts of water)
- ▶ **What happens if someone drinks water containing arsenic?**
  - nausea ● vomiting ● diarrhea ● abnormal heart rhythm ● blood vessel damage
  - a pins and needles sensation in hands and feet ● may increase risk of cancer of bladder, lungs, skin, kidney, nasal passages, liver and prostate
- ▶ **What can you do to keep your indoor water safe?**
  - If your water changes taste, odor or color suddenly, contact your local health department or the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
  - Public water supplies are tested, and regulated to ensure that your indoor water remains safe, and free from unsafe levels of contamination
  - Small private water supplies, including wells are not regulated by drinking water standards, and the owner must be responsible for water tests and treatments
- ▶ **Did you know?**
  - The Environmental protection Agency (EPA) is finalizing a rule to reduce the public health risks from arsenic in drinking water
  - Your local water supplier can give you a list of the chemicals they test for in your water, as well as how your water is treated.

## PESTICIDES

- ▶ **What are pesticides?**
  - Chemicals used to kill insects, rodents or weeds
- ▶ **How are they harmful to your indoor water?**
  - Pesticides are poisonous chemicals which can cause some health problems
- ▶ **What happens if someone drinks water that contains pesticides?**
  - nausea ● lung irritation ● skin rash ● vomiting ● dizziness ● death
- ▶ **How can pesticides get into my water?**
  - Water from public-supply systems may get pesticides from overuse and improper
  - Use and disposal of these chemicals poured down storm drains or from soil runoff
  - Water from a private well on a farm may get pesticides in if it is shallow or drilled in sandy soil where pesticides have been mixed or used, getting into the groundwater
- ▶ **What can you do to keep your indoor water free of pesticides?**
  - Avoid using pesticides whenever possible by trying a non-chemical method to control pest
- ▶ **Did you know?**
  - Testing is the only reliable way to find out if most man-made chemicals are present in drinking water