



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

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## **Michigan launches ‘Get Ahead of Lead,’ a new statewide strategy to protect families most at risk of lead’s harmful effects**

LANSING, Mich. – Michigan continues to lead the nation in efforts to prevent lead exposure, and as part of that effort the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is announcing its Get Ahead of Lead statewide strategy to identify and take steps to prevent lead exposure from household plumbing.

[To Get Ahead of Lead](#), MDHHS recommends Michigan households use a certified lead-reducing drinking water filter if your home has, or if you are uncertain if it has, one of the following:

- [Lead or galvanized plumbing](#).
- A lead service line carrying water from the street to their residence. Contact your local water supply authority to determine if you have a lead service line.
- Old faucets and fittings that were sold before 2014.

[Residents should use the filter](#) until they can remove sources of household lead plumbing.

"Michigan is committed to protecting families from lead exposure by working with communities across the state to reduce or eliminate all sources of lead in the home," said MDHHS Director Elizabeth Hertel. "By following the recommendations of the Get Ahead of Lead initiative, families can be secure in the knowledge that they have one more layer of protection between themselves and lead."

Get Ahead of Lead includes an education campaign about sources of lead; recommendations for prevention; filter safety net programs including filters for foster care families regardless of water source; and reminder support for communities with current filter programs due to action level exceedances for lead.

The initiative also includes a data-driven strategy designed to identify communities at high risk for elevated blood lead levels, as well as the identification of communities and children most at risk of lead exposure based on age of housing stock, poverty levels and other factors. This approach focuses on deploying additional resources based on community vulnerability. Communities receiving additional assistance are defined as Filter Safety Net Communities and Faucet and Filter Safety Net Communities.

Filter Safety Net Communities have a current or past lead action level exceedance or a 90<sup>th</sup> percentile over 10 parts per billion lead through Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) monitoring, as of Aug. 1, 2023. Households in these communities with Medicaid enrolled children or pregnant persons can receive the following upon request:

- Filter and replacement cartridges.
- This affects approximately 12,000 households in the following communities: Three Rivers, Dowagiac, Owosso, City of Wayne, Manistee, Eastpointe, Lapeer, Harper Woods and City of Grand Rapids.

Faucet and Filter Safety Net Communities are communities with less than \$15,170 taxable value per capita and that are at 125% of the federal poverty line regardless of LCR status. Households in these communities with Medicaid enrolled children or pregnant persons can receive the following upon request:

- Home visit and visual plumbing assessment.
- Filter and replacement cartridges.
- Single faucet replacement.
- Assistance with sign up for Medicaid Lead Abatement program which will address plumbing.
- This affects approximately 58,232 households in the following communities: Highland Park, Muskegon Heights, Albion, Saginaw, Detroit, Hamtramck, City of Benton Harbor, Flint, Pontiac, Inkster and Ecorse.

Households that previously received filters from MDHHS, but no longer qualify based on Safety Net criteria, will continue to receive replacement reminders.

Other low-income households who do not meet any of the safety net program criteria may seek support for faucet replacement or other lead abatement work from:

- [Weatherization and state emergency services.](#)
- [Lead Prevention Fund Loan Program.](#)
- [State Emergency Relief Program.](#)
- [Emergency Services Fund.](#)
- [Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency.](#)
- [Harbor Habitat for Humanity.](#)
- [U.S. Veterans Affairs.](#)
- [Local Community Action Agency,](#) or call 211 for assistance.

Lead exposure can come from many sources including paint in homes built before 1978, dust, soil, drinking water from older plumbing, jobs or hobbies that involve lead, and some imported goods.

Following are tips that everyone can use to help maintain your home's drinking water quality.

- Keep your water moving by doing everyday activities such as:
  - Running a load of laundry.

- Washing dishes.
- Taking a shower.
- Flushing the toilet.
- Clean the aerators on your faucets at least once every six months to remove trapped lead and other particles.
- Run your water until it is cold before using it for drinking, cooking and making baby formula.

It's important for parents and caretakers of children less than 6 years old to talk to their child's health care provider about blood lead testing, especially if there is concern for lead exposure. Lead exposure early in life has been shown to cause problems with learning, behavior, hearing, and growth.

MDHHS operates the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, which coordinates local public health case management for families with a child with an elevated blood lead level. Case management assists families with reducing lead exposure and working with their health care providers. For more information, visit [Michigan.gov/lead](http://Michigan.gov/lead) or call the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 517-335-8885.

Visit [Michigan.gov/GetAheadofLead](http://Michigan.gov/GetAheadofLead) for more information about the statewide strategy.

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