

# Sample Bottle Selection When Testing Water for Lead

When testing your drinking water for lead, the amount of water collected (bottle size) can help identify where the lead may be coming from. Talk with the certified laboratory you choose about the options available. Not all laboratories will have the sample bottle sizes described on the next page.

For a successful test, do not use any water in the house for at least six hours before sampling. While the water sits still, lead can move from the plumbing into the water, allowing lead to be measured. It is important to follow the instructions provided by the lab for reliable results.

## Step 1: Know where your drinking water comes from.

Your drinking water at home or where you live is supplied by one of the following water supply types. Learn more about each one at [bit.ly/DrinkingWaterSupplyTypes](https://bit.ly/DrinkingWaterSupplyTypes).

Community Public Water Supply	Type 3 Public Water Supply	Private Residential Well
		
Check with your supplier or their Consumer Confidence (water quality) Report to see if lead was recently detected (found) in the water supply.	Check with your landlord or property owner to learn if the water was tested for lead.	Check your records to learn if the drinking water has ever been tested for lead.

## Step 2: Consider these facts when testing your water for lead.

### How lead gets into drinking water

The most common source of lead in drinking water is plumbing made with lead—like pipes, fittings, fixtures, and faucets. When plumbing breaks down, pieces (particulates) can break away. Lead can also dissolve into the water.



- Older faucets, fittings, and valves sold before 2014 may contain up to 8 percent lead even if marked “lead-free”.
- Homes built before 1988 with copper plumbing may have lead-soldered joints.
- Homes on a Community Public Water Supply.** Some older homes have lead service lines. The service line is the underground plumbing that connects the home to the water main.
- Homes on a private residential well or a type 3 public water supply.** Parts of a well system like a packer or brass components of a submersible pump, may contain lead.

## Step 3: Choose the water sample bottle size based on what you want to know.

If you have a question on where and how to collect samples in your home, call the MDHHS Drinking Water Hotline at 844-934-1315.

### Plumbing Inside Your Home

**Individual First-Sample Tests:** Don't use any water in your pipes for six or more hours. Then, place an opened correct bottle size below the faucet. Open the cold water tap as if you would fill a glass of water. Fill the sample bottle to the desired volume and turn off the water tap.

- A 125 milliliter (mL) water sample can tell you if lead may be coming from the faucet.
- A 250 mL water sample can tell you if lead may be coming from the faucet and plumbing under your sink.
- A 1 liter (L) water sample can tell you if lead may be coming from the faucet, the plumbing under your sink, or 10 feet of your inside plumbing. If you choose to fill a second 1 L bottle right after the first one, any lead in that sample is likely to have come from the remaining plumbing inside your home.

### Plumbing Outside Your Home

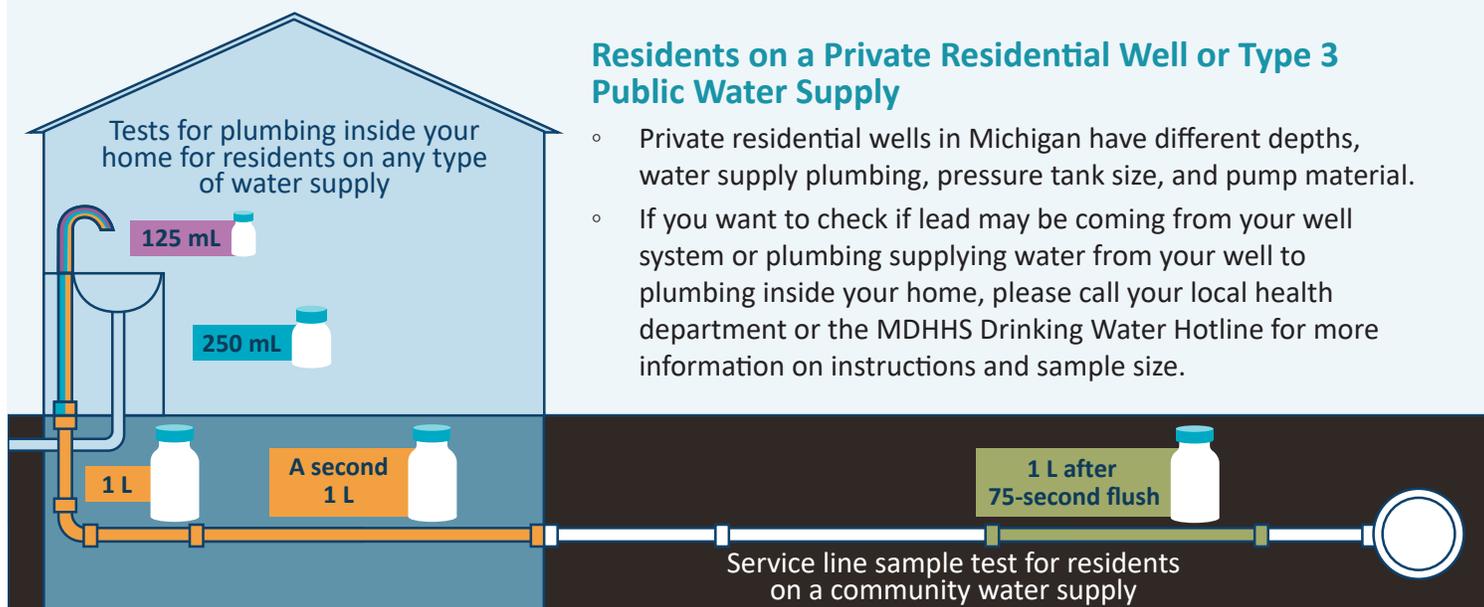
#### Residents on a Community Public Water Supply

**Service Line Sample Test** (only homes with its own service line): After water has been sitting in your pipes for at least six hours:

- Run the water for 75 seconds and then fill a 1 L bottle. Lead found in that sample is likely to have been sitting in your service line. For most households, 75 seconds will result in a sample that collects water from the middle of your service line. Note: if you are collecting an individual first-sample bottle, you will want to use a stopwatch to know how long it takes you to collect that sample. Once that sample is collected, keep the water running. Wait until you reach 75 seconds before you fill a 1 L bottle. Lead found in that sample is likely to have been sitting in your service line.

#### Regulatory Sample Test

- If you would like to test your water using the same method as public water supplies are required to use, give them a call. You may qualify to have your water testing for free. If not, they can help you understand how to properly collect the samples and what information you need to collect. In Michigan, it is required that all data collected using this method is reported. Visit [Michigan.gov/LCR](https://Michigan.gov/LCR) and scroll down to the "Sampling Instructions" for instruction.



#### Residents on a Private Residential Well or Type 3 Public Water Supply

- Private residential wells in Michigan have different depths, water supply plumbing, pressure tank size, and pump material.
- If you want to check if lead may be coming from your well system or plumbing supplying water from your well to plumbing inside your home, please call your local health department or the MDHHS Drinking Water Hotline for more information on instructions and sample size.