

# St. Joseph, Louisiana Water Safety

## *What is the current situation with the water in St. Joseph?*

Beginning in late December, the Louisiana Department of Health began working with residents of the St. Joseph community to conduct water testing for lead at all residences and business in the town that get their water from the St. Joseph Water System. Those samples have been collected, tests have been run and beginning the week of December 26, 2016 residents will receive their test results as they become available.

## *What you need to know*

- **Do not drink the water.** Residents are advised to use an alternative source of water for drinking and food preparation.
- Every home in St. Joseph was provided the opportunity to have their water tested for lead. Results are showing that some homes do have elevated lead levels. Other homes do not have elevated levels. Each homeowner will be notified of the testing results. You will know if your home tested for elevated levels of lead.
- According to the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Action Level for lead in drinking water at 15 parts per billion, or ppb.
- If you have questions, call 1-866-280-7287 or visit <http://ldh.la.gov/stjoseph>

## *If your tap water tested positive for elevated lead levels*

- If you suspect that you or your child has been exposed to lead, visit your doctor for testing. It is recommended that children age 6 or younger be tested for lead exposure during routine well-care checks with their doctor.
- If you have concerns about your health, or would like to inquire about blood lead testing, contact your doctor or one of the following:

Tensas Community Health Center  
1115 Levee Rd.  
Saint Joseph, LA 71366  
**1-318-766-1967**

Franklin Medical Center Rural Health  
Clinic - Newellton  
104 Verona St.  
Newellton, LA 71357  
**1-318-467-9949**

Franklin Medical Center Rural Health  
Clinic - St. Joseph  
448 Newton St.  
Saint Joseph, LA 71366  
**1-318-766-8506**

## **Important Note**

Boiling water will not reduce lead levels. The Louisiana Department of Health recommends residents use an alternative source of water for personal consumption, including making ice, brushing teeth or using it for preparing food (including mixing baby formula), and rinsing of foods.

## *Health effects of exposure to high levels of lead in water*

### **Children**

Even low levels of lead in the blood of children can have severe effects including:

- Behavior and learning problems
- Lower IQ and hyperactivity
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Anemia

In rare cases, ingestion of lead can cause seizures, coma and even death.

### **Pregnant Women**

Lead in the blood of pregnant women can have severe effects including:

- Reduced growth of the fetus
- Premature birth

### **Adults**

- Adults who drink lead-contaminated water over many years may develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### *Can my pet or companion animal drink tap water?*

No. Companion animals should follow the same guidelines as humans. People with livestock should contact the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry for information at 1-866-927-2476.

### *Can I wash dishes with the water from my faucet in St. Joseph?*

Yes, but dry them after. Wash dishes, bottles, and toys with unfiltered soapy Water, dry before use. Lead in water will not be absorbed by porcelain, metal, or glass.

### *Can I wash clothes with the tap water?*

Yes. Washing clothes with tap water will not impact your health.

### *Can I bathe? Can I bathe my child?*

Everyone can wash hands, bathe or shower with water from the tap. Lead does not enter the body through the skin. Do not leave small children unsupervised in the bathtub to eliminate small ingestion of water by mouth.

### *Can I water my garden? Can I eat the fruits/vegetables from my garden?*

Based on available data, fruits and vegetables are unlikely to be contaminated by routine watering. Remember to rinse your fruits and vegetables with bottled water prior to consumption.

**If you have questions, call 1-866-280-7287 or visit <http://ldh.la.gov/stjoseph>**