

Keeping Your Home Lead-Safe Clean Your Aerators

What can you do to keep your home lead-safe?


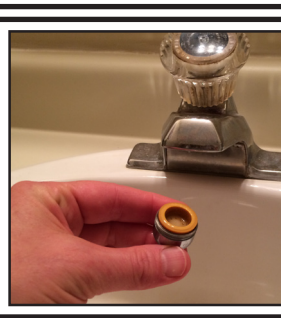

- Homes built before 1987 are more likely to have lead service lines and pipes. Some faucets and certain kinds of solder could also have lead in them, even those installed recently.
- The lead found in tap water in homes around Michigan is likely from these older pipes, solder, and faucets. You can have your water tested to see if it has lead in it.
- Replacing old pipes, service lines, and faucets is the best way to limit the lead in your tap water. New pipes, solder, and faucets should meet EPA lead-free standards.
- If you can't replace your pipes and faucets, please use an NSF-approved filter for all water that you drink or cook with. You can get a filter that attaches to your sink faucet or you can use a pitcher with a filter inside it. If you live in Flint, call 211 to find out where you can get a free faucet filter, replacement filter cartridges, or a water filter pitcher.



For bathrooms or other places where you don't have a filter:

When pipes are old, they break apart more easily. Sometimes pipes break completely; sometimes they just get new cracks. This can cause bits of lead pipe to end up in our home's water. There are screens - called aerators - on our faucets that sometimes stop the larger pieces from coming out. Aerators do help us save water - so it's good to have them - but cleaning them once in awhile is a way to limit the lead that could end up in your water.

Follow the steps below to learn how to clean your aerators:

<p>1.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The little round thing on the bottom of your faucet is the aerator (pronounced: <i>air-raytor</i>). • Unscrew the aerator from the bottom of the faucet. • You should be able to unscrew it with your fingers, but you might need a wrench if it's really stuck.
<p>2.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your aerator might not look exactly the same as this, but it's OK. • Now that you have it off, let's get started!
<p>3.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While you really only need to use water to rinse off your aerator parts, if you have these things around, they might make it easier: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An old toothbrush • A glass of vinegar

4.



- Soaking the aerator in vinegar will help loosen up some of the grime. You can leave it in as long as you want, but even just 5 minutes will help.
- The toothbrush makes it easy to scrub out the inside. Just don't use that toothbrush for brushing your teeth again!

5.



- If your aerator looks like Photo A, it has a flow control piece in it. You'll have to take it apart:
 - Pull out the pieces carefully.
 - Note the order that the pieces come out. Take a picture or write down some notes. You'll have to put them back in at the end in the same way!
- If it looks like Photo B, then you're good to go to Step 6.

6.



- You might not have all of these pieces. They might not be this color. Every aerator is a little different. Just clean what you have.
- Scrub all of the pieces. Make sure you really get down inside the metal piece, removing any bits of grime or metal flakes you can see.

7.



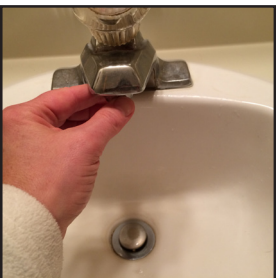
- Rinse everything very well.
- Run the water through the aerator screen - holding it right side up and upside down.

8.



- Once it's clean,
 - If your aerator looks like Photo A up above, put it back together.
 - If it looks like Photo B, you're all set.

9.



- Put your aerator back on your faucet.
- Repeat these steps every couple of weeks. This will make sure pieces of lead and other metal from any pipes aren't getting stuck in your faucet and possibly putting lead into your water.