



Testing Water for Lead - Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the school district testing its water now?

A new state program now requires water providers – in this case, the Public Utilities Department of the City of San Diego, to test water in schools if requested to do so by the school district. San Diego Unified is taking advantage of this proactive program and has requested testing in all of its schools.

What is the link to the district's new water sampling website?

<https://www.sandiegounified.org/watersampling>

Another useful resource is the California Water Board's Frequently Asked Questions webpage: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/documents/leadsamplinginschools/fags_lead_in_schools_final.pdf

Who will be doing the testing?

Testing will be performed by the City of San Diego's Public Utilities Department. The district, as well as consultants, may also conduct supplemental and investigatory sampling if warranted.

What schools will be tested by the City of San Diego?

Testing will be performed at all district schools, as well as at charter schools and private schools operating on district property.

When will testing begin?

Testing began on April 4, 2017, and is scheduled for completion before the end of the traditional school year in June. Testing will occur in the morning, Tuesdays through Saturdays, in accordance with the Division of Drinking Water's sampling protocol.

What about child development centers?

While the state program only requires water providers to test schools listed in the California School Directory – which excludes child development centers, San Diego Unified will request that the city draw one sample from each child development center that shares a location with a district school. The district plans to supplement the city's testing with additional sampling by district staff at stand-alone child development centers.

Will water used in kitchens be tested?

Kitchens will be tested as part of this effort. As the city testing is limited to a maximum of five samples per school, the district will supplement the city's testing of large kitchens when it is deemed necessary.

How will parents learn of the test results?

Parents will be updated by their child's school. Parents may also visit the district's new water sampling webpage. It will be updated throughout the testing process and can be accessed at www.sandiegounified.org/watersampling.



What should parents know about water sampling before the testing is completed?

Water testing is taking place so that the district can provide parents the information they need to make informed decisions about their child's well-being. San Diego Unified is committed to keeping parents updated as the water testing takes place. Parents are encouraged to visit the new webpage, which includes a link to the San Diego County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

Parents are also encouraged to visit the city's lead testing in schools page where additional resources may be found, including the city's annual water quality reports:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/water/quality/schoolleadtest>

What will the district do if lead levels are found to exceed the recommended level?

Should a sample result reveal higher than allowable lead concentrations, the district is prepared to do the following:

- Quickly prohibit access to contaminated water fixtures
- Provide bottled water to the school
- Investigate potential sources of contamination, and begin plumbing and infrastructure fixes to eliminate sources of lead contamination
- Coordinate with the school principals in alerting parents and the public of results (results will be posted on district's water sampling webpage, as well)
- Coordinate the re-testing of water with the city

Where can parents access information about the effects of lead?

The County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program website has excellent resources and information about lead poisoning prevention and health impacts and may be found here:

http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/child_lead_poisoning_prevention_program.html

School nurses are also prepared to answer health related questions about lead exposure and lead poisoning.

If lead is found in a school's drinking water supply, what kind of effects can this have on students?

The amount of lead in blood and tissues depends on how much water was consumed and the duration of exposure. Lead can also be found in a variety of environments, including in private homes (e.g., dust, soil, candy, ceramics, paint chips, etc.). Effects of lead are dose-dependent, so if a child has had other sources of lead exposure outside of school there is a cumulative effect. Age is also an important factor, as younger children absorb more lead. All these variables make it extremely difficult to determine what effects lead exposure at school has on any one child.

Should students who attend schools where lead was found in the water have blood lead levels tested?

If parents are concerned about their child's exposure to lead from any of the child's environments, parents are encouraged to contact their family physician. Parents who report to their doctor that their child was exposed to a known lead source may find their doctors asking other questions that estimate the extent of lead exposure that child has had in general, and in school specifically. Measuring blood lead levels gives physicians an idea of how much lead someone has been exposed to, particularly within the preceding month.