

# HEALTHY HYDRATION

Ensuring access to safe water in schools



Help children hydrate the healthy way by making drinking water at schools a priority. These recommendations assure safety, build effective access and promote water to children of all ages.



## ASSURE SAFETY

- Read Consumer Confidence Report
- Test for lead
- Remediate if needed
- Communicate



## BUILD EFFECTIVE ACCESS

- Type of outlet
- Maintenance
- Water flow
- Drinking vessels



## PROMOTE WATER

- Promotion activities
- Healthy hydration education

## POLICIES THAT SUPPORT DRINKING WATER

### FEDERAL

- Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act (HHFKA)
- Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)
- Lead & Copper Rule (LCR)

### STATE

- Plumbing code
- Lead testing policies
- Child care licensing regulations

### LOCAL

- Local School Wellness Policy
- Organizational policies





# ASSURE SAFETY

**Goal: Ensure water quality and replace all lead-containing elements in plumbing.**

Public water systems must meet water quality standards. Once water leaves the water main though, any lead plumbing materials located on-site can pose a health risk.



## General Tap Water Safety Practices

- ✔ Stay up-to-date on your state and local policies and resources for testing tap water for lead and copper
- ✔ Know your water utility and use it as a resource
- ✔ Only use water from the cold tap for drinking and cooking
- ✔ Fresher water is safer water
  - Flush all drinking and cooking water taps briefly (5-30 seconds) when they have not been used for 6 hours – overnight
- ✔ For faucets with aerators, clean the aerators using best practices
- ✔ If your plumbing system has had any changes (e.g., lead service line replacement or new water heater) consult your utility for recommendations for temporary filtration or flushing measures
- ✔ Provide culturally appropriate information on tap water quality to school community (e.g., staff, students and families)



## Water Safety Resources

### Basics

Drinking Water Safety in Schools [Factsheet](#) (National Drinking Water Alliance)  
 Is My Water Safe? In [English](#) & [Español](#) (Community Water Center)  
 Let's Tackle School Drinking Water Safety [Webinar Series](#) (National Drinking Water Alliance)

**Understanding the Consumer Confidence Report**  
 A [Guide](#) to Understanding Your Consumer Confidence Report (CDC)

**Lead Service Line Information**  
[Lead Service Line Replacement in Schools and Child Care](#) (Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative)  
[Identifying Service Line Material](#) (Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative)

**Certification Standards for Filtration**  
[NSF Standards for Water Treatment Systems](#) (National Sanitation Foundation)

**Lead Mitigation Strategies**  
 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water [Toolkit](#) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)  
[Managing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare](#) (Horsley Witten Group)

**Aerator Cleaning**  
[Clean Your Aerator](#) (Philadelphia Water - See Page 2)  
[Clean Your Aerator](#) (Rosen Management)

**For Child Care Facilities**  
[Managing Lead in DW in Schools and Childcare](#) (Horsley Witten Group)  
 See more at <https://www.drinkingwateralliance.org/safety-schools>

**More Reading**  
 Pieper KJ, Katner A, Kriss R, Tang M, Edwards MA. 2019. Understanding lead in water and avoidance strategies: a United States perspective for informed decision-making. J Water Health 17:540-55

Checklist compiled by UC Nutrition Policy Institute and members of the National Drinking Water Alliance.





## If You Receive Water From a Utility:

- ✔ Read your water utility's annual [Consumer Confidence Report](#) for a full report on the safety and quality of the water you receive from your utility.
- ✔ Contact your water utility to determine whether you have any lead service lines—and for help if replacement is needed. [Learn more](#) about full lead service line replacement online.
- ✔ Determine if there is any lead in your building plumbing or fixtures by following [federal](#) or your state's guidelines for testing drinking and cooking water outlets for lead.



## If You are on Well Water:

- ✔ If you use well water and serve more than 25 children you must comply with [Safe Drinking Water Act](#) requirements
- ✔ [Determine](#) whether your service line is made of lead—and if it is, perform a full replacement
- ✔ [Determine](#) if there is any lead in your building plumbing or fixtures by following federal or your state's guidelines for testing drinking and cooking water outlets for lead



## Addressing Tap Water Contamination

If a water source used for drinking or cooking tests above federal or your state's guidelines for lead in school drinking water, put the tap out of service and:

- ✔ Find out whether your state has policies, programs, resources or financial aid for reducing lead in school drinking water
- ✔ Determine the best strategy to reduce lead, considering the lead levels found, facility water use patterns and the lead standard your district/state aims to achieve, along with any other state requirements for drinking water provision
  - Immediate responses include:
    - Using another tap that did not test positive for elevated lead levels
    - Temporarily using bottled water until you complete remediation (this is expensive long-term)
  - [Remediation options](#) include:
    - Instituting a regular flushing program (manual or automated) to keep fresh water in your pipes
    - Using [NSF-certified filtration devices](#) at point of use to remove lead
  - A long-term solution requires identifying lead-containing plumbing or fixtures, and replacing them with plumbing parts certified to current [NSF/ANSI 61](#) standards for lead content
- ✔ If there are other contaminants (e.g., nitrates, arsenic) in your water:
  - Use [filtration devices that are NSF-certified](#) to remove the contaminant(s) in question
  - Provide bottled water until filtration is in place



## Build Effective Access

**Goal: Appealing drinking water is easily available to students throughout the day.**

Effective access to drinking water means water is easily available and appealing—the water source is clean and well-maintained, with adequate water flow—and ideally, that cups or other vessels are available.



Follow these simple steps to develop effective access to water:



### Remain up to date on policy:

- Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program [must make potable water available](#) to children at no charge when meals are served
- Check if your state has additional requirements for school drinking water access
- Support the provision of drinking water by including [thorough and actionable language](#) in your Local School Wellness Policy



### Consider water dispenser type and location:

- Prioritize key locations (e.g., main hall, gym, playground) when installing new water access points
- Assure water source is accessible to all children and not blocked or used for other purposes (e.g., janitorial)
- Provide water bottle filling stations, water jets or other dispensers (such as pitchers or a refillable water cooler, etc.)
  - Water intake is improved when students can drink from a cup or reusable water bottle
  - In hot climates or areas with poor-tasting water, chilled water can improve appeal



### Maintain water sources:

- Ensure source is clean and appealing
- Make sure source has good pressure and flow



## Follow these simple steps to develop effective access to water: (Continued)



### Build other supports for drinking water

- Have adults model healthy beverage choices
- Permit or provide drinking vessels (e.g., water bottles, cups)
- Permit children to access water sources (e.g., during meals, in class)
- Maintain restroom facilities in good condition
- Display drinking water promotional material near water source
- Provide culturally appropriate information on healthy hydration and on school water quality to school community (e.g., staff, students and families)



## Additional Resources

### Assessment Tool:

[A Citizen Science Photo-Evidence Tool to Assess Water Access in Schools](#)  
(Stanford University, University of Washington, Nutrition Policy Institute)

### Toolkits

[Keep It Flowing](#): A Practical Guide to School Drinking Water Planning, Maintenance & Repair (Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health)  
[Improving Access to Drinking Water in Schools](#) (CDC)  
[Water Works](#) (Grummon et al)

### Factsheets

[From Statute to Tap](#): Water Requirements in the National School Lunch Program (National Drinking Water Alliance)  
[Effective Access to Water in Schools](#) (Nutrition Policy Institute)

### Read More

Schwartz AE, Leardo M, Aneja S, Elbel B. 2016. Effect of a School-Based Water Intervention on Child Body Mass Index and Obesity. *JAMA Pediatrics* 170:220-6

See more at [www.drinkingwateralliance.org/access-schools](http://www.drinkingwateralliance.org/access-schools)

Checklist compiled by UC Nutrition Policy Institute and members of the National Drinking Water Alliance.

If your school operates a Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) site, find more information [here](#).





## Build Effective Access

**Goal: A school culture in which water is seen as First for Thirst, an appealing, 'cool' and health-promoting beverage of choice**

Because studies show that adding drinking water education and promotion to improved access will boost consumption, education and promotion should be considered the finishing touches as you seek to build effective access to water.



### Promotional Opportunities



#### Promotion near water sources:

- Water-themed murals or other student art
- Posters promoting water
- Tip sheets on healthy hydration
- Footprints or arrows on floor leading to water source
- Signage locating water sources



#### Activities to promote water:

- Find a drinking water champion to lead efforts on your campus
- Link drinking water for hydration to a commitment to environmentalism
- Hold student presentations, assemblies or contests promoting water
- Provide water bottles, water promotional stickers or other materials that promote drinking water as prizes and awards
- Sell reusable water bottles as a school fundraiser





## Promotional Opportunities (Continued)



### Drinking water supports throughout your school:

- Ask adults to model healthy hydration by drinking water
- Schedule water breaks and sufficient bathroom breaks
- Maintain restroom facilities in good condition
- Incorporate water-themed curricula into classes like science, math and P.E.
- Serve water at school-sponsored meetings and events
- Use culturally appropriate messages with campus appeal



## Additional Resources

### Promotional Materials

Grab a Cup, Fill it Up [Poster Pack](#) (Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health)

Water Up! [Posters](#) (Avance Center for the Advancement of Immigrant/ Refugee Health at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health)

[Potter the Otter Loves Water](#) (First Five California)

Play Every Day Water [Posters](#) (Alaska Department of Social Services)

### Other Ideas

*Winning With Water in Ava, MO* [Story](#) (Ava R-1 School District)

4-H Student Messaging Project [Story](#) (Contra Costa California 4-H)

4-H2O [Tip Sheets](#) for Student Drinking Water Projects (Contra Costa California 4-H)

### Toolkit

[Water First](#) (UC San Francisco)

### Factsheets for Students & Parents

Healthy Hydration Factsheet for [Parents, Families](#) (in English and Español) or [School Staff](#) (English only) (Nutrition Policy Institute and the National Drinking Water Alliance)

### Wellness Policy Supports Water

[Put Water in Your School Wellness Policy!](#)  
(National Drinking Water Alliance)

*Checklist compiled by UC Nutrition Policy Institute and members of the National Drinking Water Alliance.*