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A NOTICE TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS, and STAFF

Hornell City School District

Lead Testing of School Drinking Water

December 22, 2016

Safe and healthy school environments can foster healthy and successful children. To protect public health, the Public Health Law and New York State Health Department (NYSDOH) regulations require that all public schools and boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) test lead levels in water from every outlet that is being used, or could potentially be used, for drinking or cooking. If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 15 parts per billion (ppb), which is equal to 15 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$), the NYSDOH requires that the school take action to reduce the exposure to lead.

What is first draw testing of school drinking water for lead?

The “on-again, off-again” nature of water use at most schools can raise lead levels in school drinking water. Water that remains in pipes overnight, over a weekend, or over vacation periods stays in contact with lead pipes or lead solder and, as a result, could contain higher levels of lead. This is why schools are required to collect a sample after the water has been sitting in the plumbing system for a certain period of time. This “first draw” sample is likely to show higher levels of lead for that outlet than what you would see if you sampled after using the water continuously. However, even if the first draw sample does not reflect what you would see with continuous usage, it is still important because it can identify outlets that have elevated lead levels.

What are the results of the first draw testing?

All of our outlets in each of our buildings have been tested as of September 30th for pre-K through grade 5 buildings and October 31st for grade 6 through grade 12 buildings. We have received the results for Bryant Elementary School, Columbian Elementary School and the Junior-Senior High School on November 30th, the Intermediate School on December 15th and the North Hornell Elementary School on December 21st. We had no outlets testing above 15 parts per billion (ppb) in the Columbian Elementary School. In the Bryant Elementary School, we had 8 outlets of 48 exceed the 15 ppb threshold. In the Junior-Senior High School, we had 11 outlets of 89 exceed the 15 ppb threshold. In the Intermediate School, we had 4 outlets of 62 exceed the 15 ppb threshold. In the North Hornell Elementary School, we had 3 outlets of 74 exceed the 15 ppb threshold. Below are the specific sites of these outlets.

Bryant: Room 136 Fountain, Room 102 Sink, Room 223 Sink, Room 223 Fountain, Room 135 Sink, 1st Floor Kitchen Hall Left Restroom, 2nd Floor Boys' Restroom # 3, and 2nd Floor Girls' Restroom # 3.

Junior-Senior High School: "B" Gym Office # 2, "B" Gym Boys' Sink, Room 154, Nurse Exam Room, Room 148, Dishwasher Handwash, Room 113 # 1, "B" Gym Boys' Office, Room 113 # 2, Room 113 # 3, and Soup Kettle.

Intermediate School: 1st Floor Girls' Left, 1st Floor Boys' Elev, 1st Floor Girls' Right, and 3rd Floor Faculty.

North Hornell: Sink 115, Sink 101, Bathroom Sink 113

We anticipate the results for the results for retesting completed on the above name locations exceeding 15 ppb that are not due for replacement in the current capital project in the coming weeks.

What is being done in response to the results?

Outlets that tested with lead levels above the action level (15 ppb) were removed from service, unless an outlet is a sink faucet needed for handwashing. In that case, a sign was posted at the outlet indicating that the sink is not to be used for drinking. Outlets that tested below the action level remain in service with no restrictions.

What are the health effects of lead?

Lead is a metal that can harm children and adults when it gets into their bodies. Lead is a known neurotoxin, particularly harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of children under 6 years old. Lead can harm a young child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. Lead exposure during pregnancy may contribute to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. There are many sources of lead exposure in the environment, and it is important to reduce all lead exposures as much as possible. Water testing helps identify and correct possible sources of lead that contribute to exposure from drinking water. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, high levels of lead in tap water can cause health effects if the lead in the water enters the bloodstream and causes an elevated blood lead level. Most studies show that exposure to lead-contaminated water alone would not be likely to elevate blood lead levels in most adults, even exposure to water with a lead content close to the EPA action level for lead of 15 parts per billion (ppb). Risk will vary, however, depending on the individual, the circumstances, and the amount of water consumed. For example, infants who drink formula prepared with lead-contaminated water may be at a higher risk because of the large volume of water they consume relative to their body size.

What are the other sources of lead exposure?

Lead is a metal that has been used for centuries for many purposes, resulting in widespread distribution in the environment. Major sources of lead exposure include lead-based paint in older housing, and lead that built up over decades in soil and dust due to historical use of lead in gasoline, paint, and manufacturing. Lead can also be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, foods, plumbing materials, and cosmetics. Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies but drinking water could become a possible source of lead exposure if the building's plumbing contains lead. The primary source of lead exposure for most children with elevated blood-lead levels is lead-based paint.

Should your child be tested for lead?

The risk to an individual child from past exposure to elevated lead in drinking water depends on many factors; for example, a child's age, weight, amount of water consumed, and the amount of lead in the water. Children may also be exposed to other significant sources of lead including paint, soil and dust. Since blood lead testing is the only way to determine a child's blood lead

level, parents should discuss their child's health history with their child's physician to determine if blood lead testing is appropriate. Pregnant women or women of childbearing age should also consider discussing this matter with their physician.

Additional Resources

For more information regarding the testing program or sampling results, contact *Douglas H. Wyant, Jr.* at (607)324-1302, or go to our school website: www.hornellcityschools.com.

For information about lead in school drinking water, go to:
http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htm

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/LeadTestinginSchoolDrinkingWater.html>

For information about NYS Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention, go to:
<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

For more information on blood lead testing and ways to reduce your child's risk of exposure to lead, see "What Your Child's Blood Lead Test Means":
<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2526/> (available in ten languages).