

WIIN Project: Testing for Lead in Drinking Water at Schools and Child Care Facilities

January 2021



HAWAII STATE
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH



ABOUT THE PROJECT

This project to test the drinking water for lead at Hawai'i schools and child care facilities is part of a nationwide program that was established by the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act of 2016. As part of the WIIN Act, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) granted states the money to test drinking water for lead at schools and childcare centers. The project is a collaboration between the Hawai'i State Departments of Health, Education, and Human Services.

WHY WAS MY SCHOOL CHOSEN FOR TESTING?

Schools were chosen for testing if they might be at "higher risk" based on EPA's criteria. These criteria include the ages of the buildings and the children served at the school in addition to other various factors.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

Schools involved in the project will have pre-planned visits from members of the project team to identify the drinking water taps that require sampling. A date for sampling will be arranged with the school between May and December 2021. The day before sampling, project team members will visit the school and flush the taps, leaving them unused overnight. Early the next morning, samples will be taken from each of those drinking water taps and sent to the Hawai'i State Lab for analysis. Site visits and sampling by the project team are not expected to interfere with any regular school activities and all COVID-19 safety procedures will be followed.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Hawai'i WIIN Project Website

<http://health.hawaii.gov/WIIN>



Hawai'i Childhood Lead
Poisoning Prevention Program
(HI-CLPPP) Website

<http://lead.hawaii.gov>



EPA WIIN Grant Website

[http://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/
wiin-grant-lead-testing-school-
and-child-care-program-
drinking-water](http://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-lead-testing-school-and-child-care-program-drinking-water)



Call the Department of Health
Hazard Evaluation and
Emergency Response (HEER)
Office

(808) 586-4249

HOW CAN I GET THE RESULTS?

Results will be available as soon as possible on the WIIN project website: <http://health.hawaii.gov/wiin>. Results will also be sent to each school for posting in administrative offices. Please be aware that due to capacity limitations at the lab, results may not be available for up to a few months after samples were taken. If any of the samples result in lead levels above the action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), the affected tap will be blocked off within 24 hours or the next school day and will no longer be available for use. Follow-up testing will be done and plans will be made to fix the problem causing the lead contamination.

WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?

Lead is a heavy metal that is naturally present in the environment and has been used for infrastructure, including pipes. When lead gets into human bodies, it can harm the brain and nervous system. Long-term effects of childhood lead exposure include problems with learning, school performance, attention, and behavior as well as anemia and other health problems.

Children can be exposed to lead in many ways. Most exposures happen at home and are the result of deteriorated lead-based paint or contaminated soil. The lead transferred onto a child's hands or toys may be accidentally ingested when the hands or toys are put into their mouths. Eating paint chips or chewing on painted surfaces can also introduce lead into a child's body. Other lead exposures happen from the mouthing of metal objects, the making of fishing weights, and exposure to certain types of imported spices and ritual products. Visit <http://Lead.Hawaii.gov> for more information on lead sources and how to protect your children from lead exposure.

Drinking water contaminated with lead is another way that children can be exposed. While this has been a significant problem in some communities on the mainland, Hawai'i has not had the same types of problems with lead contaminated drinking water. Public water systems in Hawai'i do not historically have lead contamination. However, it is possible for lead to contaminate drinking water through fixtures and piping within a school, particularly in older buildings. This project will investigate the drinking water taps at risk for lead and identify any problem areas to prevent children from being exposed to lead.