

Lead Sample Results from Forest Hills Consolidated School

11 samples taken 11/23/21 through 11/24/21

Forest Hills Consolidated School	Home Economics; West Sink	45.4 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	Home Economics; South Sink	5.9 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	Kitchen; Cook Area; Ice Machine	0 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	Home Economics; East Sink	8.6 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	Kitchen; Dish Room; Large Sink	3.7 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	Kitchen; Cook Area; Small Sink	2.6 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	Kitchen; Cook Area; Large Sink	22.5 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	Middle School Water Fountain	0 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	Gymnasium Water Fountain	21.5 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	Elementary Water Fountain	0 ppb
Forest Hills Consolidated School	High School Water Fountain	0 ppb

How does lead get into the water? When lead is present in water, it typically leaches, or dissolves, into water flowing through plumbing and fixtures inside a building from sources such as solder, pipes, or the faucets themselves. The school's well water or water provided by your local water district are unlikely sources of lead.

What are the Health Effects of exposure to lead in drinking water? Infants and children who drink water containing high levels of lead can experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink water containing excess levels of lead over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

What level of lead is safe? No level of lead is safe. Because of the potential serious health risks, both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) agree that there is no known safe level of lead in a child's blood.

Please be aware that this sampling is done under conditions that are optimal for identifying lead in water. By having the water sit unused for many hours, lead that might be leaching from pipes or fittings is more easily discovered. *However, these levels are likely not the level of lead present in the drinking water throughout the school day.*

What can I do? Here are a few steps you can take to reduce the risk of your child being exposed to lead through school drinking water:

- Provide your child with bottled water or water from your home to reduce their usage of school drinking water outlets. Be sure to sample your home water for lead, too.
- Remind your child to let the water run for 30 seconds before drinking or filling a water bottle at school, which will lower any possible lead concentration.
- Consult your doctor if you have any specific health concerns.

History of Lead at Forest Hills Consolidated School

In 2021, Maine legislature decided to get a snapshot of lead in school, requiring every school in the state to perform lead tests on any fixture that may be used for consumption. The legislature decided that an acceptable level would be anything less than 4 parts per billion (ppb), which is significantly less than federal guidelines of 15ppb. These tests were to be performed between October 2021 and May of 2022. Forest Hills had 11 sites sampled in November of 2021 and of these 2 sites tested over the 4ppb limit, while 3 additional sites were over the federal limit of 15ppb.

This isn't the first time Forest Hills has tested and been proactive about reducing the levels of lead in their drinking water. Late 2016, early 2017, the school underwent a series of lead testing as well, finding a fixture in the kitchen that required remediation. The school investigated further, discovering the fixture itself was the blame. After a series of additional tests, the school replaced the fixture and set a flushing schedule.

What is being done?

The school will continue to take the signs of lead in their fixtures seriously. The gymnasium water fountain is and will remain out of service for the foreseeable future. This fountain has been out of service since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and will remain out of service due to being one of the fixtures that had results showing higher levels of lead. Other water fountains located in the Elementary, Middle, and High school wings all tested 0 ppb, possibly due to a filter included in these new water bottle filling stations and will remain operational. The kitchen and home economics sinks will undergo a series of investigative samples to identify the most cost-effective remediation technique. This will likely include identifying continuously high results and labeling these sinks as non-consumption, or in a better case scenario having a notice to flush the lines for a set amount of time before consuming water from select fixtures. Previous sample results from 2016-2017 indicate that flushing the lines for 6 minutes brought lead levels below 4ppb. Staff will be retrained on this procedure immediately and notices will be placed at problematic fixtures to ensure this procedure is followed. Future samples will be taken at these fixtures by March 30th.