



# Genesee County Board of Commissioners

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October 1, 2015

## Public Health Emergency Declaration for People Using the Flint City Water Supply with the Flint River as the Source

The County is issuing an Emergency Advisory recommending that people not drink the water coming from the City of Flint using the Flint River as the water source unless:

It has been tested to assure it does not contain elevated levels of lead.

It is being filtered through a National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) approved filter certified to remove lead that meets ANSI standard 53.

Findings reported in the Detroit Free Press September 30, 2015 indicate that Governor Snyder has publically acknowledged that Flint's water supply "appears" to have problems. Snyder has conceded that "it appears that (water) lead levels could be higher or have increased," and that there are "probably things that weren't fully understood when the switch was made." This is in direct contrast to previous reports from the State that downplayed the severity of the situation and conflicted with local data released by researchers at Hurley Medical Center.

Young children are most vulnerable to leads effects, because prior to age six, their brain and central nervous system are still forming and easily susceptible to damage. For an adult to suffer significant health effects, exposure to lead would have to be sustained and more intense. Most adults who are affected by lead have been exposed in an occupational setting, such as working as a house painter or in a battery recycling plant.

Pregnant women are at special risk because the lead they absorb crosses the placenta and enters the fetus.

It's important to remember that there is no known safe level of lead in a human body, Experts now use a reference level of 5 micrograms per deciliter to identify children with blood lead levels that are much higher than most children's levels. This new level is based on the U.S. population of children ages 1-5 years who are in the highest 2.5% of children when tested for lead in their blood.

Lead in water can contribute to a child's blood lead level. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, who regulates municipal water supplies, has assured us that the water leaving the Flint Water Plant meets all Federal and State requirements. The City of Flint has a documented problem with lead in its drinking water due to service and household lines that may contain lead or lead solder which can leach lead because of the corrosivity of the water since changing to the Flint River as the source supply. Generally, those who are most vulnerable

Page 1 of 3

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to leads health effects from exposure to unfiltered tap water are the very youngest children. For this reason, if you are not sure about the lead content in your tap water, it's best to either use a filter that has been found to be effective for reducing or eliminating lead, or to use bottled water instead. Water filters should be National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified to remove lead and meet ANSI standard 53. If these options are not available to you, then it's best to let the water run for at least five minutes before using it for either drinking or cooking purposes. Always use cold water instead of hot water for drinking and cooking.

It's especially important to avoid using untested or unfiltered tap water for mixing infant formula unless you can assure your water is lead free.

When leaded gasoline was in widespread use in this country, the lead came out the tail pipe and was deposited in yards near the roads. That lead may still be in those yards. In addition, lead paint continues to be a major source of childhood lead poisoning and can be found in homes built before 1978 when lead paint was banned in the U.S. and may be a hazard inside and outside the home especially where paint is worn or flaking.

There are many other potential sources of lead exposure, including:

- "Home remedies" and cosmetics imported from other countries
- Tamarind or chili-based candies from Mexico
- Stained glass windows
- Fishing sinkers
- Firing ranges
- Old, deteriorated mini-blinds
- Bean pots and painted ceramics
- Crystal decanters
- Lead crystal glassware

Since no safe level has been identified it is in everyone's interest to reduce exposure to lead as much as possible. Recommendations on ways to reduce lead exposure can be found on the Genesee County Health Department website [www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips.htm>.

Recent data provided by Hurley researchers has indicated a significant increase in blood lead levels in children after the switch to Flint River water. The County Health Officer has requested that MDHHS provide specific data to support their claim that state data is more comprehensive and does not show a significant increase. To date the state has failed to provide the requested data by the September 30, 2015 deadline in our previous request to the state.

COUNTY OF GENESEE

BY: 

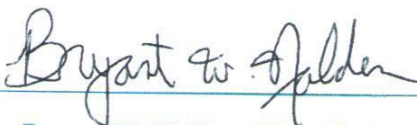
Jamie W. Curtis, Chairperson  
Board of Commissioners

Date: 10-1-15

BY: 

Brenda Clack, Chairperson  
Human Services Committee  
Board of Commissioners

Date: 10-1-15

BY: 

Bryant W. Nolden, Vice Chairperson  
Board of Commissioners

Date: 10-1-15

GENESEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

BY: 

Mark Valacak, M.P.H.  
Health Officer

Date: 10-1-15