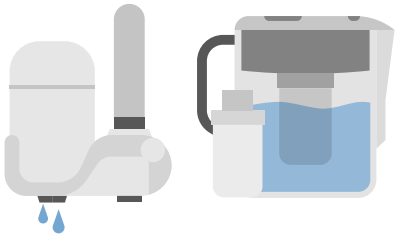
AQUA Water Filter Guidance for Customers

University Park customers under the advisory:
Pick up filters and filter replacements



Faucet & pitcher filters

Filter replacements

Aqua Distribution Center

Address:
24650 S. Western Ave.

Hours*:

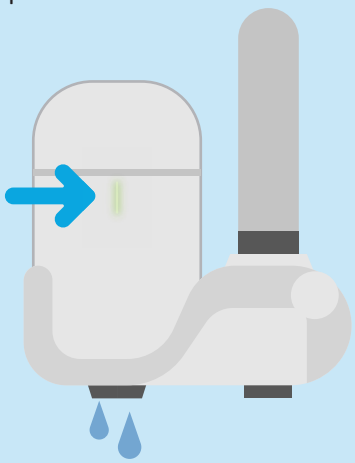
Monday:	11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Wednesday:	11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Saturday:	11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

*Closed on national holidays

If you are under the advisory in University Park, we remain commited to offering these resources and keeping you informed while we build on our progress, together.

Faucet filter reminder: Check your lights

If you are using a faucet filter we provided, the indicator light can help you determine when it's time for a replacement.



Green: The filter is working properly.

Yellow: Plan to replace your filter soon.

Red: It is time to replace your filter.

Tips for using your filters at home

- Ensure that your filter is NSF-certified to remove lead, like those we have provided.
- Flush cold tap water for 2-3 minutes before filtering to consume it.
- Follow all manufacturers' instructions for faucet and pitcher filters.

Thank you for your patience as we build on our progress in your community.
Visit **WaterFactsIL.com** or call **877.987.2782** with questions.

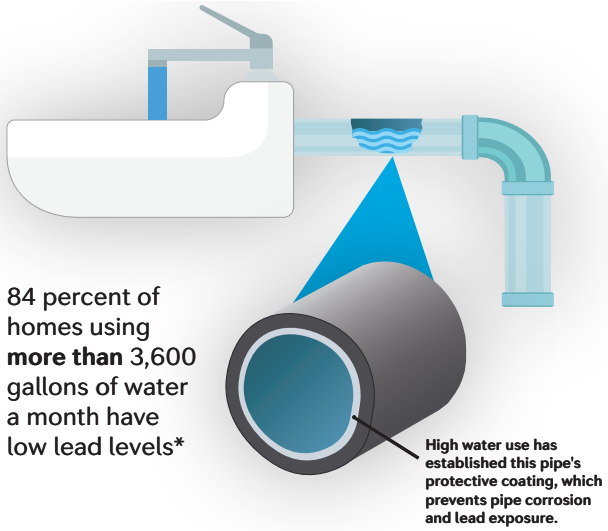
Updated 8/28/2020

AQUA Water Use Guidance for Customers

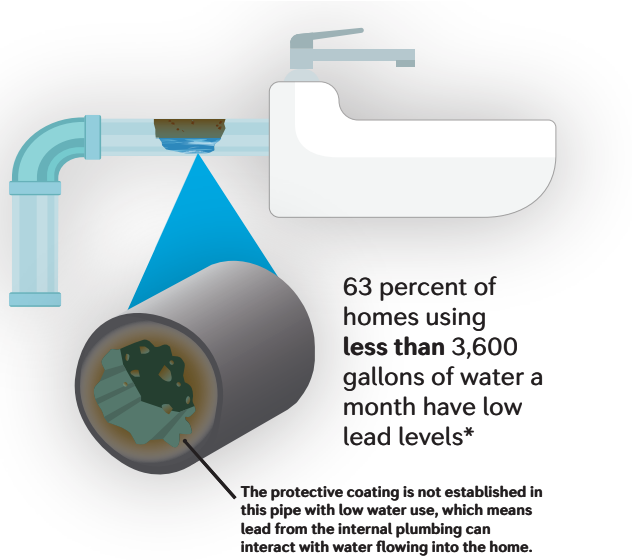
Help the treatment: Use your tap water

If you are under the advisory, be sure to use cold tap water at your kitchen sink every day and regularly use your water. This will help the treatment build a protective coating to prevent potential lead exposure.

Pipe with high water use



Pipe with low water use



*Monthly water use is based on monthly medians and low lead levels include those below 15 micrograms per liter (ug/L).

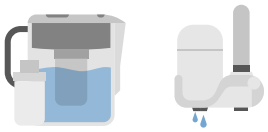
Source: Compliance data collected September-December 2019

Helpful tip:

You can flush your pipes with daily tap-water uses, like doing a load of laundry, washing dishes or bathing. This water use can help our treatment move through your pipes and take effect at a faster rate.

Impacted customers can consume tap water if they flush and filter.

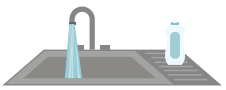
1. Run cold tap water for two to three minutes, AND



2. Filter cold tap water through faucet or pitcher filters that are certified to remove lead. Replace filters as indicated by manufacturers' instructions.

There is no need to filter tap water for non-consumption purposes, including:

Washing hands



Washing dishes

Doing laundry

Bathing

Thank you for your patience as we build on our progress in your community.
Visit **WaterFactsIL.com** or call **877.987.2782** with questions.

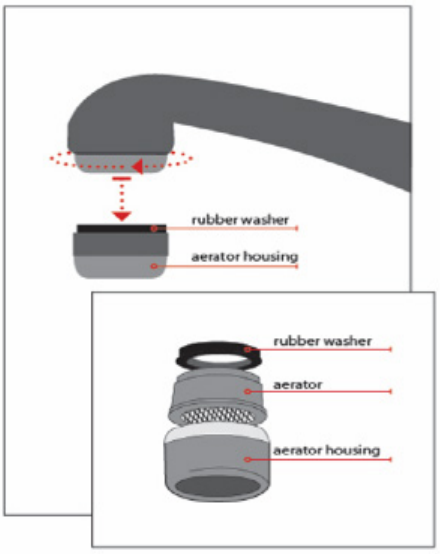
Updated 8/28/2020

AQUA Guidance for Cleaning Faucet Aerators

Be Lead-Safe: Clean your aerators

One way to protect your household from lead is to periodically clean your faucet aerators. Aerators are small attachments at the tips of faucets that regulate the flow of water. Over time, tiny particles of lead can break off and get trapped in aerator baskets, eventually contaminating the water.

Cleaning them only takes a few minutes – here's how:



1. Unscrew the small round piece that is attached to the bottom of your faucet; if it hasn't been removed in a while, you may need to give it a gentle counter-clockwise turn with a wrench.

2. In most cases, you can remove small debris by simply turning the aerator over and rinsing it with water. However, grime or stubborn pieces can be removed using a glass of vinegar and an old toothbrush.

3. You can soak the aerator as long as necessary in the vinegar, but five minutes will be sufficient. Simply brush off any particles and rinse with water.

4. Reassemble the aerator, which normally has a washer to prevent leaks, and screw it back onto your faucet. It's that easy!

5. Repeat this procedure every few weeks to prevent buildup.

Distributed August 28, 2020

August 28, 2020

Dear Valued Aqua Illinois Customer,

As always, we appreciate your patience while we continue collaborating with national experts and regulators to resolve the lead issue for those who remain impacted in University Park. We understand these are challenging times and our efforts remain laser-focused on restoration.

Your health and safety are at the heart of everything we do, and we remain committed to providing important information and resources while we build on our progress.

Enclosed, you will find an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency-mandated public education document. Though the community's overall water quality has improved and hundreds of homes have been removed from the advisory, this document will notify you that lead levels in certain University Park homes still exceed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's threshold for lead in drinking water. This document also provides helpful information about ways to reduce potential lead exposure.

We're sending this information to all customers in the University Park water system, even if you're no longer under the advisory.

FOR CUSTOMERS WHO WERE REMOVED FROM THE ADVISORY

If you were notified that your home is no longer under the advisory, you can still use your tap water normally for consumption and non-consumption purposes. If you're not sure if your home is under the advisory, call **877.987.2782**, and a member of our team will gladly assist you.

FOR CUSTOMERS WHO REMAIN UNDER THE ADVISORY

As you will see in the enclosed documents, you *can* consume your tap water if you follow this two-step process first:

1. Run cold tap water for two to three minutes, AND
2. Filter cold tap water through properly installed and maintained faucet and pitcher filters that are certified by the NSF to remove lead. We are committed to ensuring that you have these protective resources and continue to offer them, free of charge, at the Aqua Distribution Center (24650 S Western Ave, University Park, IL 60484).

After filtering cold tap water, you can heat it up prior to consumption (for example, on the stove or in the microwave). As always, there is no need to filter tap water for non-consumption purposes, such as bathing, washing your hands, washing dishes or doing laundry.

While overall lead levels in University Park have improved, regular tap water use remains critical for the treatment to take full effect. Since last June, we've collected more than 4,400 samples, and testing results show that homes with higher water use tend to have lower lead levels.

As such, we advise all impacted customers to regularly use cold tap water at the kitchen sink and use tap water throughout the home to help the treatment fully coat their homes' pipes.

Running cold tap water is also a highly effective way to reduce potential lead exposure. In fact, in 2020, 100 percent of samples collected from University Park homes *after* running the cold tap water for two to three minutes tested below the EPA's threshold for lead in drinking water.

If you have any questions after reading the information in this public education packet, including about the support we're offering, please call our customer service center at **877.987.2782** and a representative will connect you with a subject-matter expert.

We understand the essential nature of the services we provide – and with regulatory oversight, expert guidance and your continued water use, we'll keep making strides toward a solution in University Park.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation.

Sincerely,

Craig Blanchette
President, Aqua Illinois

Aqua Illinois

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Aqua Illinois – University Park found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. Please read this notice closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

Updated Public Notification for University Park

Taking the following steps will reduce your exposure to lead:

1) Run cold tap water for two to three minutes, then filter cold tap water using a properly installed and maintained faucet or pitcher filter that is certified by the NSF to remove lead.

2) Clean your faucet aerators.

3) Use cold tap water filtered through an NSF-certified filter to reduce lead for drinking, cooking and making baby formula AND follow Steps 1-3.

4) Regularly use cold tap water at your kitchen sink and use tap water throughout the home to help the corrosion control treatment take effect in your home's pipes.

Health Effects of Lead
Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

Sources of Lead
Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the workplace and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). The primary sources of lead exposure for most children are deteriorating lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust, and lead-contaminated residential soil. Exposure to lead is a significant health concern, especially for young children and infants whose growing bodies tend to absorb more lead than the average adult. **Infants that drink formula prepared with lead-contaminated water are at a greater risk because of the large volume of water they drink relative to their body size.** Lead is rarely found in source water, but can enter tap water through corrosion of plumbing materials and service lines. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures and solder.

Aqua Illinois – University Park
PWS ID #IL1975030
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Steps You Can Take to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Your Water

<u>If the level of lead found in your drinking water is above 15 parts per billion (ppb) or</u> if you are concerned about the lead levels at your location, there are several things you can do:

- ***Run your water to flush out lead.*** Run cold tap water for **two to three minutes** before using an NSF-certified lead-removing filter for drinking, cooking or preparing baby formula. Running the cold tap water will help to flush stagnant water from your pipes and reduce lead prior to consumption. It is important to note that 100 percent of samples collected from University Park homes in 2020 after running the cold tap water for two to three minutes are below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's threshold for lead in drinking water. This validates that running the tap water is highly effective at reducing potential lead exposure.

- ***Filter cold tap water through a filter certified by the NSF to remove lead before consuming your tap water.*** **Do not** cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. **Do not** use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula. After filtering the cold tap water, you can heat it up before consumption if you prefer (for example, on the stove or in the microwave).

- ***Remove and clean your aerators.*** Aerators are small attachments at the tips of faucets that regulate the flow of water. Over time, tiny particles of lead can break off and get trapped in aerator baskets, eventually contaminating the water. Unscrew your aerators every few weeks to remove debris, rinse and soak away any particles, and prevent build-up.

- ***Do not boil water to remove lead.*** Boiling water will not reduce lead.

- ***Consider alternative sources or treatment of water.*** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters. If you are under the advisory, you can pick up resources at the Aqua Distribution Center.

- ***Test your water for lead.*** Call us at the number below to find out how to get your water tested for lead.

- ***Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.*** New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. As of June 19, 1986, new or replaced water service lines and new household plumbing materials could not contain more than 8% lead. Lead content was further reduced on January 4, 2014, and plumbing materials must now be certified as "lead-free" to be used (weighted average of wetted surface cannot be more than 0.25% lead). Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

- ***Get your child's blood tested.*** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.

What Happened? What is Being Done?

In 2016, customers in the University Park service area expressed concerns about water hardness and discoloration caused by iron in the water. To address these concerns, Aqua Illinois began preparing to transition the service area from well water to softened and filtered water from the Kankakee River. Before the transition, Aqua Illinois began a new treatment process widely known to remove iron and rust and protect against lead. Aqua Illinois documented and submitted the new treatment process to the IEPA and transitioned the water supply to Kankakee River water from well water at the end of 2017.

On June 13, 2019, Aqua Illinois began receiving test results from regularly scheduled lead and copper compliance samples collected in May 2019, some of which showed elevated lead levels above the lead and copper rule action level. Aqua Illinois began a comprehensive investigation into the cause or causes of the elevated lead levels. On June 14, 2019, Aqua Illinois issued an advisory to all customers in the University Park, Green Garden and Monee Townships service area to ensure the safety of our customers. Within three days, Aqua Illinois worked with the IEPA to remove some areas and hundreds of individual properties from the advisory and collaborated with national experts and regulators to begin a treatment to resolve this situation. Aqua Illinois has directly notified all customers who have been lifted from the advisory. Customers can call Aqua Illinois' customer service center at **877.987.2782** to find out if their homes have been lifted from the advisory. Aqua Illinois continues to educate customers in University Park on protective steps to take to consume tap water.

At this time, our investigation identified – supported by state and federal regulators – that the likely cause of elevated lead levels in a limited number of homes is due to a change in water chemistry combined with lead solder in the internal plumbing of homes built before 1990 in University Park. Homes built after 1990 are not expected to have lead solder. This combination caused the protective coating in these pipes to be stripped, exposing the lead solder in the internal plumbing in a limited number of homes in University Park to the water in their internal plumbing systems.

Aqua Illinois has seen overall water quality improvement since introducing an orthophosphate solution to the water entering the University Park water distribution system. The treatment establishes a protective coating on the interior of the household plumbing, preventing the water from contacting lead solder that may be in the piping.

As of July 2020, about 73 percent of all compliance-sampled homes are at or below the EPA's threshold for lead, 15 micrograms per liter (ug/L). According to the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule that regulates drinking water, the treatment is considered effective when 90 percent of sample locations meet the EPA threshold.

Though we have made significant progress, regular water use is critical as testing results have shown that homes with higher water use tend to have lower lead levels. It is important that water consumers follow the above recommendations to reduce their exposure to lead that may be in the water, and that they continue to run their tap water to help the treatment take effect in their homes' pipes.

For More Information
Call Aqua Illinois Customer Service at 877.987.2782 or visit our website at www.WaterFactsIL.com. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.

Please share this information with all other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, schools, businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

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