

# TESTING YOUR DRINKING WATER FOR LEAD

## A Step-By-Step Guide for Illinois Day Care Facilities

Disclaimer: This is a convenient guide for the collection and analysis of drinking water samples for Illinois Day Care facilities. Please refer to your state licensing requirements before proceeding with sample collection.

### Background

Illinois Day care centers, day care homes and group day care homes built before January 1, 2000 must test every water source, including taps, faucets, drinking fountains and refrigerator water and ice dispensers. While bathroom faucets are required to be tested, shower and tub fixtures are excluded. Refrigerator ice dispensers are also required to be tested. All testing must be performed by an Illinois EPA certified/accredited drinking water laboratory using approved drinking water methods with a minimum reporting level of 2.0 mg/L (ppb).

### STEP 1: Order Sampling Kits

Sample bottles must be obtained from the laboratory. Count the number of water and ice sources and order the sampling kits. For example, a day care home with a kitchen faucet, bathroom faucet and a refrigerator with water and ice dispenser will order 3 water sample kits and 1 ice sample kit. Sample kits can be ordered from Suburban Laboratories at [drinkingwaterlabs.com](http://drinkingwaterlabs.com) or for multiple sites or large quantities call (708) 544-3260.

### STEP 2: Prepare for Sampling

The water system must remain stagnant (unused) for a minimum of six (6) hours, and a maximum of eighteen (18) hours before sampling can begin. This is best accomplished by sampling early in the morning and not running faucets, showers, ice makers and toilets overnight. It is suggested that you collect water the day prior in a pitcher for drinking and a bucket of water for flushing the toilet during the overnight hours.

Preparation is the key to a successful sample collection process. Make sure you have two 250-mL sample bottles for each water source and one 1-L bottle for each ice dispenser. Contact the lab if you need additional bottles. Please read the following sampling instructions before starting the collection process.

### STEP 3: Sample Collection

1. Two sequential 250-mL samples must be collected from each cold-water source. A “first-draw” sample is taken after the water system has been stagnant and a second “flush” sample is collected after running the water for 30 seconds.
2. Collect the first set of samples from the **kitchen** faucet by placing the “first-draw” sample bottle under the tap at a 45-degree angle and turning on the cold water tap. The flow of water should be about the size of a pencil.
3. Fill the “first-draw” sample to just below the neck of the opening, and do not overfill. When filled, remove the bottle but do NOT turn off the water.
4. Allow the water to run for 30 seconds and fill the “flush” sample bottle in the same manner. When finished filling both bottles, immediately turn off the tap and place the cap on the bottles.
5. The second set of samples should be collected from the refrigerator water dispenser (if present) in the same manner as the kitchen. If collecting an ice dispenser sample, fill one 1-L sample bottle with ice after collecting the refrigerator water sample. (Only 1 sample is required for ice). Collect all remaining water samples throughout the facility.
6. Before submitting the samples to the laboratory, make sure that all sample bottles are labeled, caps are tightened, and the paperwork is filled out completely with the date/time the water system was last used, the time of collection and the unique sample name for each sample bottle (i.e. “kitchen first draw”, “kitchen flush”, etc...). Be careful to ensure that you place the sample ID label on the correct bottle. Mixing up labels and bottles is a common error to avoid.



### STEP 4: Submit Samples to the Laboratory

If you are mailing the samples, ensure caps are securely tightened and packed with bubble wrap to prevent breakage during shipping. Samples can also be dropped off at one of our offices in Oak Brook Terrace or Geneva. Samples do not require ice or refrigeration. The laboratory will email the results to you in several days.