

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER ANDERSON, GATEWAY, GEORGIA & KNIGHTS HALLS, COCHRAN CAMPUS

## TESTS SHOW LEVELS OF LEAD ABOVE DRINKING WATER STANDARDS

Our water system recently violated a drinking water requirement, however, **this is not an emergency**. We want you to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct the situation.

We routinely sample water for lead. Voluntary tests performed on 3/23/2016 showed four buildings (out of 30 tested) on the Cochran campus had levels of lead above acceptable limits. We are notifying our students and employees and taking action to reduce the levels of lead present in the water.

Middle Georgia State University is acting immediately on the recommendations of our environmental consultants. We are taking the following immediate steps to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water on our Cochran campus:

- Bottled water is being distributed on the Cochran campus;
- In the four affected buildings (Anderson Hall, Gateway Hall, Georgia Hall, and Knights Hall) water fountains are being disabled or filters are being installed;
- Notices are being distributed in the four affected buildings, indicating that elevated levels of lead are present;
- At our request, Sodexo Dining Services is using alternate supplies of water for food preparation; and
- The dining facilities on the Cochran campus will be using disposable plates, cutlery, and cups until further notice.

Members of the Middle Georgia State University community should have no concerns about food consumption at the University while this situation is addressed. Further, EPA standards dictate that **water can still be safely used for bathing/showering and washing hands**.

In addition to the above immediate steps, Middle Georgia State University has begun treating the water on the Cochran campus as part of a corrosion control plan, designed to reduce the amount of lead that dissolves into drinking water.

Below, you will find some simple steps you can take reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water while this situation is resolved.

## FACTS ABOUT LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

### HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD

Lead is found throughout the environment in lead-based paint, air, soil, household dust, food, certain types of pottery, porcelain and pewter, and water. Lead can pose a significant risk to your health if too much of it enters your body.

Lead builds up in the body over many years and can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. The greatest risk is to young children and pregnant women. Amounts of lead that won't hurt adults can slow down normal mental and physical development of growing bodies. In addition, a child at play often comes into contact with sources of lead contamination – like dirt and dust – that rarely affect an adult.

It is important to wash children's hands and toys often and to try to make sure they only put food in their mouths.

### HOW LEAD ENTERS OUR WATER SYSTEM

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing.

These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome-plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect houses and buildings to water mains (service lines). In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes and other plumbing materials to 8.0%.

When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon if the water has not been used all day, can contain fairly high levels of lead.

### LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formulas and concentrated juices that are mixed with water.

EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead.

### STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

#### 1. FLUSH YOUR SYSTEM

Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in a faucet has gone unused for more than 6 hours. The longer water resides in plumbing, the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet for about 15 to 30 seconds.

Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of the plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your health. It usually takes less than one to two gallons of water.

#### 2. USE ONLY COLD WATER FOR COOKING AND DRINKING

Do not cook with, or drink water from, the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and then heat it.

#### 3. USE BOTTLED WATER

The steps described above will reduce the lead concentrations in your drinking water. However, if you are still concerned, you may wish to use bottled water for drinking and cooking.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

You can consult a variety of sources for additional information. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead. A state government agency that can be contacted is the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's West Central District at 478.751.6612.

Middle Georgia State's Plant Operations can provide you with information about the facility's water supply:

Middle Georgia State University  
100 University Parkway  
Macon, GA 31206  
478.934.3000

Updates will be posted online at: [www.mga.edu/water](http://www.mga.edu/water)



**Middle Georgia**  
State University

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER ANDERSON, GATEWAY, GEORGIA & KNIGHTS HALLS, COCHRAN CAMPUS

## QUESTIONS ABOUT WATER AT MIDDLE GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY COCHRAN CAMPUS

The health and well-being of our campus community is essential. While *this situation is not an emergency*, you have a right to information about the quality of your drinking water.

### WHAT IS GOING ON?

A voluntary water test performed on our Cochran campus on March 23, 2016 indicated that water in four buildings on campus—Anderson Hall, Gateway Hall, Georgia Hall, and Knights Hall—had levels of lead above the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) “Action level” of 15 parts per billion. We ordered the voluntary test because past water tests on the Cochran campus have intermittently shown slightly elevated levels of lead in various locations around campus.

Of our five campuses, Cochran is the only campus served by its own water system. Every six months, we test the Cochran Campus water system for the presence of lead. The other campuses are connected to city water systems, which do their own testing. If lead concentration is higher than a certain amount, we must take steps to lower it and promptly notify consumers.

Tests conducted in December 2014, after students had finished the Fall semester, follow-up tests in March 2015, and voluntary tests conducted last week all indicated slightly elevated levels of lead in some buildings on the Cochran Campus. While we posted some information on the university website as early as Spring 2015, further updates, posters and notification to students, faculty, and staff on the Cochran Campus are necessary.

### WHAT IS MGA DOING ABOUT IT?

MGA has developed and is implementing both short-term and long-term solutions, including:

- From the moment we learned of the situation, we have been working with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD), the Georgia Rural Water Association (GRWA), water systems engineers from Carter and Sloope, and experts at J&T Environmental Services to evaluate the current quality of our water and implement best practices to improve it.
- Starting last week, we placed posters on lead in drinking water in high traffic areas on the Cochran Campus and are providing all students, faculty, and staff with additional information via email and online at [www.mga.edu/water](http://www.mga.edu/water).
- We are disabling water fountains or installing filters on water fountains in affected buildings.
- We have secured an alternate source of water for food preparation in Georgia Hall, and are using disposable plates, cups, and cutlery until the situation is resolved.
- Until levels return to below the EPA threshold, bottled water is available for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors at the Cochran Campus.
- President Blake ordered an audit of the university procedures involved in monitoring water quality and informing the campus community about health and safety issues. The results of that audit will lead to swift action to address any personnel or process shortcomings.
- External consultants will continue to test and monitor the quality of our drinking water above and beyond EPA and EPD requirements.
- Effective immediately, we will begin treating the water on the Cochran Campus as part of a corrosion control plan in coordination with external consultants and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

### WHERE DO I GET BOTTLED WATER IN COCHRAN?

Water is available in Georgia Hall from 8am to 5pm and in the Wellness Center from 8am to 8pm. In addition, water will be delivered to residents of the affected buildings.

### WHOM DO I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

Assistant VP for Facilities, David Sims, at 478-934-3000 or [david.sims@mga.edu](mailto:david.sims@mga.edu).



**Middle Georgia**  
State University