

CIRCULAR

Date: December 16, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID-19: 2020-210

To: Early Learning and Child Care Centres

Subject: Child care centres encouraged to access no-cost lead testing for drinking water

Type: Policy For Internal Reference Only
 Procedure Information Only

Effective Date: Immediately

On September 28, 2020, the Manitoba government announced a program to fully fund lead testing of drinking water in child care centres, and grant funding for any remediation or repairs required as a result (see [circular 2020-152](#)). This program will be in place until March 31, 2021.

Child care centres were identified as a priority for precautionary lead testing to ensure the safety of infants and young children. Because their brains are still developing, infants and young children are most at risk to the effects of lead, even at low levels. Exposure can negatively impact young children's neurological development (e.g., lower intelligence quotients/IQs) and behaviour, and in adults it can cause increased blood pressure or kidney problems.

Further information about the issue of lead in drinking water can be found at:

- https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/water/drinking_water/rld_largebuildings.pdf
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/reports-publications/water-quality/water-talk-minimizing-exposure-lead-drinking-water-distribution-systems.html>

The Manitoba government awarded the contract for lead testing in child care centres to ALS Environmental. In late November, the company emailed centres across Manitoba to offer testing. Nearly 25 per cent of centres have responded to request testing kits, and we strongly encourage the remaining facilities to do so while the program remains in place.

The testing process is quite simple. Centres must designate a main contact and sampler, who can collect samples from the water taps and fountains that could be used for drinking water.

Interested centres can email Katherine Koetke, Account Manager at ALS Environmental, at Katherine.koetke@alsglobal.com. Emails should include the name and contact information for the person who will be responsible for sampling, and the number of taps and fountains used for drinking water.

Once ALS Environmental receives the information, they will send the sampling materials and instructions, and will arrange to pick up the samples 24 hours after they were dropped off.

If you have questions regarding lead in drinking water testing, please contact Nancy Eidse, Laboratory and Special Contracts Coordinator with the Office of Drinking Water, at Nancy.Eidse@gov.mb.ca or 204-945-5776. If centres have any other questions, they can contact their designated ELCC Coordinator.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

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