



# BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## News Release

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For Immediate Release

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### Health Department to Continue Water Filter Distribution in Benton Harbor

Water filter distribution for Benton Harbor City residents will be ongoing into the future

(Benton Harbor, MI) - For the past month, the Berrien County Health Department has made water filters available to any resident in the City of Benton Harbor who had concerns about elevated levels of lead in their drinking water. To date, nearly 1,700 filtration systems have been distributed at no cost to Benton Harbor city residents.

Moving into the future, the Berrien County Health Department will continue to make filters and replacement filter cartridges available for residents of the City of Benton Harbor in a variety of locations on a regular schedule. Benton Harbor city residents can pick up a filtration system (if they have not already received one for their household) or a replacement filter cartridge through the following:

- Beginning in March, future distribution sites will be held on the first Monday of each month at Harbor of Hope Church (769 Pipestone Rd) from 4-6pm and the third Thursday of each month at the Benton Harbor Public Library (213 E Wall St) from 4-6pm.
- Replacement filter cartridges are available at the Berrien County Health Department Benton Harbor office (2149 E. Napier Ave.) during normal business hours of 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday.
- Residents can request a filtration system or replacement cartridge be mailed to their home if they are unable to get to a pick up location.
- Programs that delivered filtration systems to homebound individuals will continue to deliver the replacement cartridges as well.

For those that are not using a filtration system certified for lead (NSF 53 Certification), the Health Department still recommends that Benton Harbor city residents flush the water for 5 minutes before use if it has been more than 6 hours since the water was used in the home (i.e. overnight, while away from home for work/school, etc.). Flushing is not required if a certified filtration system is being used.

In addition to providing the filtration systems to residents, the Berrien County Health Department also continues to monitor trends in blood lead levels throughout the county, with a particular focus on children in the City of Benton Harbor. There continues to be a decline in the proportion of children with elevated blood lead levels both within the City of Benton Harbor and in all of Berrien County. There is no data to suggest that any children have experienced elevated blood lead levels from water in Benton Harbor. The Health Department continues to follow-up with children in homes with test results at or above 15ppb for lead and helps link families with blood lead testing for their children.

As children under the age of 6 are at the greatest risk of lead exposure, the Health Department encourages families to consider having their children's blood tested if there are lead exposure risks. Benton Harbor residents can have their children tested for lead in their blood free of charge at InterCare Community Health Network (800 M-139, Benton Harbor), at Spectrum Health Lakeland Center for Outpatient Services (3900 Hollywood Road, St. Joseph), or at the Berrien County Health Department (2149 E. Napier Ave, Benton Harbor).

More information about lead in drinking water can be found at [www.bchdmi.org](http://www.bchdmi.org) or at the Berrien County Health Department Facebook page. Questions can also be directed to the Public Health Hotline at 1-800-815-5485.

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