

News Feature | February 10, 2017

NYC Schools Nix 'Pre-Flushing,' Find More Lead

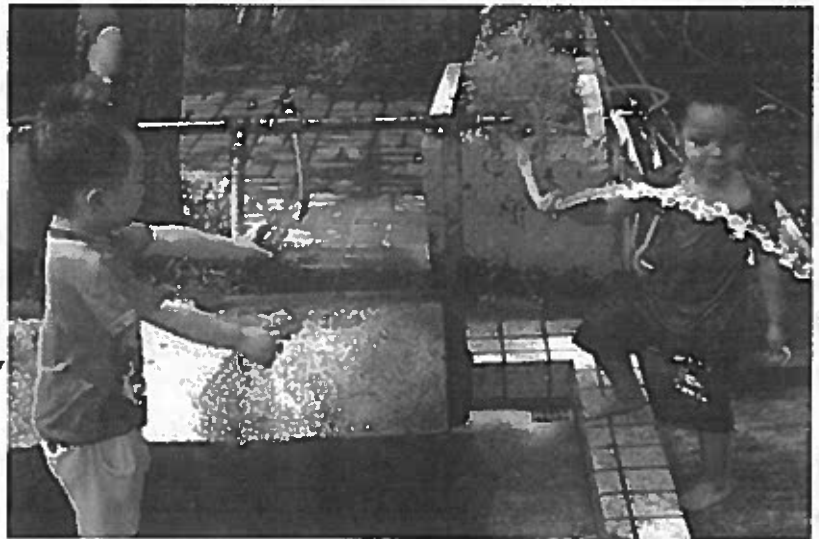


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After changing its protocol for water-quality testing in schools, New York City found lead in the water at a higher number of outlets.

The city decided to eliminate a controversial practice known as “pre-flushing” from its water quality testing protocol at schools.

Previously, workers ran the water for two hours the night before samples were taken, according to *The New York Times*.



“So far, the latest tests have found nine times as many water outlets — kitchen sinks, water fountains, classroom faucets or other sources — with lead levels above the U.S. EPA’s action level of 15 parts per billion as last year’s tests found,” the article said, citing a report by the state health department.

Marc Edwards, a professor at Virginia Tech who helped uncover the Flint water contamination crisis, told *The New York Times* that the results show that pre-stagnation flushing can “mask” serious lead problems in schools.

“I applaud their retesting in a manner that better reveals the widespread scope of the contamination and health concern,” he said, per the report.

Michigan is nixing pre-flushing, as well, as a result of the Flint lead-contamination crisis.

“Until recently, both the city of Flint and guidelines issued for the entire state by the Michigan department of environmental quality (MDEQ) required that residents turned on their faucets for several minutes before taking a sample of water for lead testing,” *The Guardian* reported.

U.S. EPA regulations do not explicitly block the use of pre-flushing, according to *The Guardian*.

“The situation in Flint has taught us that technical compliance may not be enough,” an MDEQ spokesperson said. “The MDEQ has been working in concert with the U.S. EPA to take a look at every aspect of the lead and copper rule and to see where improvements can be made.”

Other water systems have come under fire for pre-flushing and other practices that could influence water-quality results. The Philadelphia city council, for instance, revealed plans last month to investigate its procedures for water-quality testing, according to *The Guardian*.

To read more about methods for lead testing visit Water Online’s Drinking Water Regulations And Legislation Solutions Center.

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