

HOW TO INSTALL A CERTIFIED LEAD-FREE FAUCET

Sinks, faucets, and plumbing fixtures sometimes contain unsafe levels of lead.

If your faucet is a source of lead in your water, we recommend:

1. Replacing the faucet with a certified lead-free faucet.
2. Replacing the supply hoses underneath the sink (these are the lines that bring water to the faucet) with certified lead-free, stainless steel hoses.
3. Installing a point-of-use water filter to protect against any other potential lead sources elsewhere in the plumbing (see our flyer on [How to Choose a Water Filter to Remove Lead](#) [bit.ly/CWUSK-Filters])



Replacing a faucet is easy! If you are handy, you can replace a faucet with only basic tools. If you are unsure about doing it yourself, a plumber or handyman can quickly do the job with these steps:

Step 1. Check what kind of faucet you need.

Faucet fixtures come in many different types and sizes. You will need to check the number of holes on the faucet you are replacing. If it has two or three holes, you will need to know the distance between the holes so you can buy a new one that fits your sink. Use a measuring tape to check the distance between the faucet handles. For some types of faucets, you may need to remove the old faucet first (Step 6) to know how many holes there are and the distance between them.

Step 2. Find a certified lead free faucet and supply hose – look for NSF/ANSI 372 or 61, certification.

Lead is often added to pipes and faucet fixtures to make the metal more malleable and less brittle. However, faucets used for drinking or cooking in the U.S. must be lead free under the Safe Drinking Water Act. For a faucet to be considered “lead free” it must have less than 0.25% lead in any materials that are in contact with the water.

The **American National Standards Institute (ANSI)** is a private, nonprofit organization that administers and coordinates voluntary U.S. standards for different commercial products and services.

The **National Sanitation Foundation (NSF)** is an independent product testing, inspection, and certification organization focused on protecting human health.

To find a trustworthy lead-free faucet and supply hose:

- A. Check that the product is certified to lead-free standards** created by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). This could include either:
 - NSF/ANSI 372 which shows that a faucet has no more than 0.25% lead.
 - NSF/ANSI 61 which shows that a faucet meets NSF/ANSI 372 and also does not leach more than 1 microgram of lead into the water during leaching tests. This standard is even safer than NSF/ANSI 372 alone.
- B. Make sure that the product is certified by an independent laboratory accredited by ANSI.**

C. Beware of cheap products advertised as “lead free” but not certified to NSF/ANSI standards.

D. Look for “Q≤1” on the packaging or product. This mark means the product meets the 2020 edition of NSF/ANSI/CAN 61 standard which requires the product leach no more than 1 microgram of lead.

E. Look for products with certification marks from these companies listed in the table below. The laboratory’s logo should be accompanied by text showing which certification standard was tested (for example, either NSF/ANSI 372 or NSF/ANSI 61).






Certification mark images are from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s factsheet: ‘How to Identify Lead Free Certification Marks for Drinking Water System & Plumbing Products’ (nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P100LVYK.txt). Label images are from Safeplumbing.org (<https://www.safeplumbing.org/advocacy/health-safety/low-lead-faucet/>).


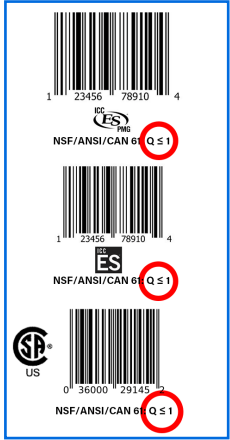








A certification mark is a trademark used to show consumers that particular goods and/or services, or their providers, have met certain standards. Check out the examples below.

Step 3. Review the manufacturer’s instructions.

After selecting your certified lead-free faucet, read through the installation instructions thoroughly. The written instructions may also direct you to manufacturer videos to review. You can also view our faucet replacement video entitled ‘Replacing a faucet’ on our ‘How to’ page (www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/howto).

Step 4. Assemble the tools you’ll need.

-  A light for under the sink
-  An adjustable wrench
-  Plumber’s thread seal tape
-  WD-40 or another penetration oil spray
-  You may also need a wire brush and a hair dryer

Company	Certification Mark	Examples
CSA group www.csagroup.org/testing-certification/product-areas/plumbing/water-quality-and-health-effects/		
ICC-ES https://icc-es.org/mark/		
NSF International info.nsf.org/Certified/dwtu/listings_leadreduction.asp		
UL www.ul.com/services/health-effects-testing-and-certification-drinking-water-system-components		
IAPMO R&T, Inc. www.iapmo.org/rt/marks-of-conformity		
Intertek www.intertek.com/building/plumbing/		
Truesdail https://www.truesdail.com/product-certification/		
WQA https://wqa.org/grow/product-certification/		

Certification mark images are from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s factsheet: ‘How to Identify Lead Free Certification Marks for Drinking Water System & Plumbing Products’ (nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P100LVYK.txt). Label images are from Safeplumbing.org (<https://www.safeplumbing.org/advocacy/health-safety/low-lead-faucet/>).

Step 5. Shut off your water.

You can find the water shutoff valves in the cabinet below the sink. Use your fingers to twist both the hot water AND cold water supply lines to the "off" position. Make sure you also know where the building's main water shut-off valve is before you begin. If you are dealing with old, rusted, or brittle pipes it is a good idea to shut off the water in the whole building before attempting to remove the old faucet.

TIP: Sometimes the shutoff valves can get stuck or rusted, which can make them difficult to budge. If that happens to you, get a hair dryer and apply some heat to the valve. That should loosen the valve enough that you can close it by hand. Don't use tools like wrenches to try to close the valve: if you put too much twisting pressure on it, it could break. If you're still having trouble, shut off the building's main water valve before you go any further.



Water shut off valve in the "on" position. When valve is parallel with pipe (like in the image), water is "on." If pointing away from the pipe, water is "off."

Step 6. Remove the old faucet and supply hoses.

Removing the old faucet can be the trickiest part of the process. The space under the sink is often narrow and dark. You'll need a work light and an adjustable wrench to loosen the nuts.

TIP: The nuts can often be stuck or rusted. Try brushing away as much corrosion as possible with a wire brush. Then, spray on some WD-40. That will help dissolve the corrosion and make the nuts easier to turn. If you're still having trouble loosening the nuts, it may be time to call a professional.

Step 7. Install the new faucet and supply hoses.

Once the old faucet is out, installing the new faucet and supply hoses is the easy part. Follow the video or written instructions that come with your new faucet to learn how to install it. Use thread seal tape on the pipe fittings to prevent leaks. After you are finished installing the new faucet, turn the water back on and check for leaks. You may need to tighten the fittings underneath the sink or add more plumber's tape to the pipe threads.

Step 8. Flush the new faucet

Even certified lead-free faucets need to be broken in to make sure that any trace amounts of lead used in the manufacturing process are rinsed from the inside surface of the faucet. It is recommended that you allow for three weeks of flushing before

using the water for drinking or cooking purposes or before sampling for lead. Immediately after installing, flush the hot and cold water lines for 10 minutes. Then run the water for at least 30 seconds 4 times per day during the three week break in period.

More resources

Check out our other Get the Lead Out flyers

- [Checking for Lead Service Lines \[bit.ly/CWUSK-LSL\]](https://bit.ly/CWUSK-LSL)
- [How to Choose a Water Filter to Remove Lead \[bit.ly/CWUSK-Filters\]](https://bit.ly/CWUSK-Filters)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 'How to Identify Lead Free Certification Marks for Drinking Water System & Plumbing Products'

<https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockkey=P100LVYK.txt>

More Information

This informational flyer was developed for RTI International's Clean Water for US Kids™ program.

Clean Water for US Kids

www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/

RTI International

3040 E. Cornwallis Road, P.O. Box 12194
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194 USA



**CONTACT US, CALL OR TEXT
1-888-997-9290**



This document was revised August 2023.