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## NYSDOH Offers Free Lead Testing

**BREWSTER** – The New York State Department of Health is offering free lead testing for residential drinking water. The Putnam County Department of Health encourages residents to take advantage of this opportunity. “Lead is a serious environmental hazard, especially if young children are

exposed,” said Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, Interim Commissioner of Health. “Last year, the state health department ramped up water testing in schools. Now they are offering free testing for residential water. This is an important step to protect the not only children, but all residents in our county.”



The NYSDOH launched the \$1.5 million free lead testing pilot program earlier this month.

The free testing is available to Putnam and other NYS residents with a private well, or a public water system, as long as funds are available.

Children who are exposed to the toxin lead can have serious, long lasting health problems. Unfortunately lead is sometimes found in toys and other products produced abroad. Public health law attempts to reduce these problems by requiring the testing of lead levels in children’s blood, at age one and again at two. Last fall Governor Cuomo also signed legislation requiring immediate testing of drinking water in all New York State schools. Now the state has set aside funding for homes as well.

The testing is performed on two water samples that the resident collects at home. Both are easy to collect. One is a “first-draw” sample after the water has not been run for an extended period of time; the second is a “flush” sample collected after running the water. Complete instructions and a test kit with water sample containers, return packaging and postage, will be mailed upon request. The easiest way to obtain a kit is to visit the [NYSDOH website](https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/free_lead_testing_pilot_program) and click on the link to the Bureau of Water Supply Protection. This opens your email program and with it a pre-written email to fill in and send to: [FreeWaterTesting@health.ny.gov](mailto:FreeWaterTesting@health.ny.gov) (mailto:FreeWaterTesting@health.ny.gov). You provide your name, phone number, email and mailing addresses. You are also asked to select your first and second choices from a provided list of six testing sites in NYS. The lab is notified by NYSDOH and a test kit is sent to your home. Another option is to call the NYSDOH at 518-402-7650. For more information about the free lead test pilot program, visit the [NYSDOH website](https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/free_lead_testing_pilot_program).

For answers to common questions about lead in drinking water, visit the [FAQ link](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/lead-FAQ-1-31-17.pdf) on the Putnam County DOH website, or call the Putnam County DOH at 845-808-1390.