Brass faucets can legally contain 8 percent lead by weight. Standards and materials are considered lead-free when they contain 0.2 percent or less of lead. Before 1987, solder normally contained about 50 percent lead.

Always use cold tap water for food and beverage preparation. Hot tap water can cause lead or other metals from the house's plumbing or hot water tank to leach into the water. If you're concerned about elevated lead levels in your water, run the tap until the water becomes cold before using it. Remember to catch the flushed water for plants and landscaping.

Soft water can be more corrosive and dissolve higher levels of lead if it's present in plumbing. Some home treatment devices, such as water softeners, also can make water more corrosive.

The most common source of lead in treated drinking water is a customer's plumbing and their service lines. Older homes and buildings are more likely to have lead service lines than newer ones. If you want to know what type of service line you have, a licensed plumber can test your line to determine if it is made of lead or another material.

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