

Union College Water Initiative (UCWI)
<http://minerva.union.edu/hollochk/water/index.html>

Following the well-known lead contamination problems with the water system in Flint, Michigan, there has been a heightened awareness of drinking water quality. New York has mandated that all public schools test their drinking water systems for lead. To expand drinking water testing in other areas, the Geology Department has established the Union College Water Initiative (UCWI). Our goal is to provide free analyses of drinking water for the heavy metals lead, copper, and zinc.

FAQ

- Who analyzes the samples? *Union College students, under the supervision of Union College faculty.*
- How are the samples analyzed? *By inductively-coupled plasma–mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) in the Geology Department.*
- What are we analyzing? *We are currently analyzing for lead, copper, and zinc concentrations in drinking water.*
- Why are we doing this? *To provide analyses of potentially hazardous metals in drinking water, and to raise awareness of drinking water quality issues. Is your water safe to drink, given EPA regulations?*
- Are we a certified analytical lab? *No. Our analyses are good, but we are not certified by any local, state, or federal agency. Our analyses are provided on an as-is, informational basis.*
- How will we communicate results? *In most cases results will be e-mailed to sample collectors. With personal and detailed address information removed, the data will also be available online on the UCWI web page.*

Sample Instructions

- A. Cold drinking water taps only.
- B. Fill out the form below for samples you collect. Write legibly, please.
- C. Samples should be collected in the provided bottles. Do not rinse or touch the inside of the bottle.
- D. **If possible, the sample should be first draw** – the faucet has not been used in the past 8 to 18 hours. This will allow for determination of worst-case contamination from the pipes. Do not let the water run – *fill immediately*.
- E. A second sample from the same tap, after letting the water run for 1 to 2 minutes, will show if any contaminated water can be easily flushed out.
- F. When sampling the water, don't let the bottle lip touch the faucet (to prevent scale or rust contamination).
- G. Bring all samples to: c/o UCWI, Geology Dept., Room 310, Olin Building, Union College, Schenectady, NY, 12308.

Contact: UCWI, Geology Department, Union College, Schenectady, NY, 12308, hollochk@union.edu or freyh@union.edu.

