"Where and how does lead get into drinking water?

Lead rarely occurs naturally in water; it usually gets into the water from the delivery system. Lead pipes are the main contributor to high lead levels in tap water.

Other sources include parts of the water delivery system such as lead solder used to join copper pipes, brass in faucets, coolers, and valves.

Although brass usually contains low lead levels, the lead can still dissolve into the water, especially when the fixtures are new.

Private wells more than 20 years old may contain lead in the "packer" element that is used to help seal the well above the well screen.

Some brands of older submersible pumps used in wells may also contain leaded-brass components. Corrosion of pipes and fixture parts can cause the lead to get into tap water."

"How do I remove lead from my drinking water?

First, try to identify and remove the lead source. If you have a private well, check both the well and the pump for potential lead sources. A licensed well water contractor can help you determine if any of the well components are a source of lead.

Heating or boiling your water will not remove lead. Because some of the water evaporates during the boiling process, the lead concentration of the water can actually increase slightly as the water is boiled.

If it is not possible or cost-effective to remove the lead source, flushing the water system before using the water for drinking or cooking may be an option…Avoid cooking with or drinking hot tap water because hot water dissolves lead more readily than cold water does. Do not use hot tap water to make cereals, drinks or mix baby formula.

You may also wish to consider water treatment methods such as reverse osmosis, distillation, and carbon filters specially designed to remove lead. Typically these methods are used to treat water at only one faucet."

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) For the full text, go to the website address:
http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/private/wells/disease/lead.html#how_remove_from_water