

# **Six million Americans have lead-tainted water in homes, schools: report**

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Some six million Americans have drinking water tainted with higher levels of lead than allowed by US federal guidelines, the USA Today reported on Thursday.

With the nation focused on a major crisis in Flint, Michigan, where lead from aging pipes leached into the municipal water supply, the newspaper launched an investigation which found higher than acceptable lead levels in about 2,000 water systems across the United States.

Tainted water was supplied to hundreds of daycare centers and schools, the report said.

Children are the population most vulnerable to the pernicious effects of lead, a toxin which affects the neurological system and can lead to permanent learning delays and behavioral problems.

Higher than allowed lead levels were found in all 50 US states, USA Today reported.

A sample of water drawn from one elementary school in Maine found lead levels some 42 times higher than the Environmental Protection Agency limit of 15 parts per billion, while a preschool in Pennsylvania recorded lead levels 14 times higher than allowed.

An elementary school in Ithaca, New York tested earlier this year showed 5,000 parts per billion of lead—a level so high it met the federal

Environmental Protection Agency's designation for "hazardous waste."

More than 8,000 children in Flint, economically devastated by shutdowns and layoffs in the car industry, were exposed to lead for more than a year before the tap water contamination was uncovered by citizen activists.

The news report was published as Michigan Governor Rick Snyder prepared to appear Thursday before a congressional oversight committee probing the Flint crisis.

Critics are calling for the resignation of Snyder, who ordered water from the Flint River to be diverted to supply water to the city, in a cost-cutting measure.

Experts believe that the chemical-laced Flint River water corroded lead-bearing pipes, allowing large amounts of the chemical element to leach into the city's water.

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