

Chlorine in Drinking Water



Chlorine has been added to disinfect drinking water in America to protect public health for more than 100 years.

Chlorine kills or inactivates harmful microorganisms which can cause illness

or diseases such as cholera, typhoid fever, and dysentery. Chlorine is a naturally existing element that is added to public water supplies to make drinking water safe.

The Connecticut Public Health Code requires that chlorine be added to all reservoir water supplies and groundwater supplies may also be chlorinated.

Chlorine has residual properties that allow it to continue disinfecting as water travels from the treatment facility to your home.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much chlorine is added to my water?

As little chlorine as possible is added to our water systems while still maintaining an adequate level for disinfection. We work to maintain a residual chlorine level in our distribution system of one part per million to protect the water quality as it moves through our pipes. A good analogy for one part per million is one inch in 16 miles.

How can I remove the taste and smell of chlorine from my water?

We understand some customers object to the taste and smell of chlorine, even in small amounts. Fortunately, the taste and smell of chlorine can easily be removed by refrigerating tap water in a sealed container, preferably glass, as some plastic bottles can add their own taste to the water. Having a bottle of ice water in the fridge also helps conserve water because you don't have to let the tap run for the water to get cold.

Are there health concerns related to chlorine in drinking water?

Chlorine reacts with organic material which is naturally present in water supplies and creates compounds known as disinfection by-products, "DBPs". The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) currently regulates a group of DBPs known as Trihalomethanes.

The water provided to you is tested and has very low concentrations of DBPs so does not represent a significant risk of exposure to these compounds. Research on the relationship between DBPs and cancer and other health risks is ongoing.

The disease prevention benefits of chlorination, however, far outweigh the risks associated with chlorinated drinking water.

Are there alternatives to chlorine?

Some alternatives to chlorine are being used to disinfect water, but the benefits vary by system and needs. While there is no perfect alternative, options include:

- Chloramine, a chlorine related compound;
- Ozone, which is popular in Europe, but doesn't have the same residual properties to disinfect all the way to the tap that chlorine does; and
- Ultraviolet light which disinfects without chemicals, but is not effective for killing the organisms that cause certain diseases such as Giardiasis and Cryptosporidiosis.

The Connecticut Public Health Code provides for safe chlorination of public drinking water supplies.

For more information on chlorine please see:

www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Drinking-Water/DWS/Drinking-Water-Section>