

Additional Information

All sources of drinking water are subject to potential contamination by substances that are naturally occurring or man made. These substances can be microbes, inorganic or organic chemicals and radioactive substances. All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. If you are caring for an infant you should ask advice from your health care provider.

EPA is reviewing the drinking water standard for arsenic because of special concerns that it may not be stringent enough. Arsenic is a naturally occurring mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations.

The average household uses approximately 400 gallons of water per day. There are many low cost and no-cost ways to conserve water. Small changes can make a big difference - try one today and soon it will become second nature.

- ▶ Take short showers - a 5 minute shower uses 4 to 5 gallons of water compared to 50 gallons for a bath.
- ▶ Shut off water while brushing your teeth, washing your hair and shaving and save up to 500 gallons a month.
- ▶ Use a water-efficient showerhead. They are inexpensive, easy to install and can save you up to 750 gallons a month.
- ▶ Run your clothes wash and dishwasher only when they are full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- ▶ Water plants only when necessary.
- ▶ Fix leaky toilets and faucets. Faucet washers are inexpensive and take only a few minutes to replace. To check your toilet for a leak, place a few drops of food coloring in the tank and wait. If it seeps into the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fixing it or replacing it with a new, more efficient model can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- ▶ Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered. Apply water only as fast as the soil can absorb it and during the cooler parts of the day to reduce evaporation.
- ▶ Teach your children about water conservation to ensure a future generation that uses water wisely. Make it a family effort to reduce next month's water bill!
- ▶ Visit www.epa.gov/watersense for more information.

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