

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) MCL Violation at Wells College/Village of Aurora Public Water System

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this incident was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we did (are doing) to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Quarterly testing results for a 12-month period ending June 30, 2022 show that our system exceeds the maximum contaminant level (MCL), for Trihalomethanes (TTHM). The standard for TTHM is 80 parts per billion. The level of TTHM averaged at one of our system's locations from samples collected over the past 12 months is 97 parts per billion.

What should I do?

- There is nothing you need to do. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. If a situation arises where the water is no longer safe to drink, you will be notified within 24 hours.
- If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been an emergency, you would have been notified within 24 hours.

TTHMs are four volatile organic chemicals which form when disinfectants react with natural organic matter in the water. People who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

What is being done?

The Village of Aurora and Wells College water operators will focus additional hydrant flushing efforts in the affected area which will reduce the formation of TTHMs prior to the Quarter 3 2022 sampling. We anticipate resolving the problem within 90 days.

For more information, please contact the Village of Aurora at 315-364-5239 or Wells College Facilities at 315-364-3226.

This notice is being sent to you by the Village of Aurora and Wells College. State Water System ID#: NY0501710 and NY0512920.

Date distributed: _____.

What are trihalomethanes?

Trihalomethanes are a group of chemicals that are formed in drinking water during disinfection when chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic material (e.g., decomposing vegetation such as tree leaves, algae or other aquatic plants) in surface water sources such as rivers and lakes. They are disinfection byproducts and include the individual chemicals chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane, and chlorodibromomethane. The amount of trihalomethanes formed in drinking water during disinfection can change from day to day, depending on the temperature, the amount of organic material in the water, the amount of chlorine added, and a variety of other factors.

Disinfection of drinking water by chlorination is beneficial to public health. Drinking water is disinfected by public water suppliers to kill bacteria and viruses that could cause serious illnesses, and chlorine is the most commonly used disinfectant in New York State. All public water systems that use chlorine as a disinfectant contain trihalomethanes to some degree.

What are the health effects of trihalomethanes?

Some studies suggest that people who drank water containing trihalomethanes for long periods of time (e.g., 20 to 30 years) have an increased risk of certain health effects. These include an increased risk for cancer and for low birth weights, miscarriages and birth defects. The methods used by these studies could not rule out the role of other factors that could have resulted in the observed increased risks. In addition, other similar studies do not show an increased risk for these health effects. Therefore, the evidence from these studies is not strong enough to conclude that trihalomethanes were a major factor contributing to the observed increased risks for these health effects. Studies of laboratory animals show that some trihalomethanes can cause cancer and adverse reproductive and developmental effects, but at exposures much higher than exposures that could result through normal use of the water. The United States Environmental Protection Agency reviewed the information from the human and animal studies and concluded that while there is no causal link between disinfection byproducts (including trihalomethanes) and human health effects, the balance of the information warranted stronger regulations that limit the amount of trihalomethanes in drinking water, while still allowing for adequate disinfection. The risks for adverse health effects from trihalomethanes in drinking water are small compared to the risks for illness from drinking inadequately disinfected water.