



Pharmaceuticals in Drinking Water Guide

Current news stories have alerted consumers to the potential presence of trace levels of pharmaceuticals in tap water supplies around the U.S. A recent Associated Press (AP) report revealed that trace amounts of many different pharmaceuticals have been found in drinking water. In the course of their investigation, members of the AP National Investigative Team indicated they reviewed hundreds of scientific reports, analyzed federal drinking water databases, visited environmental study sites and treatment plants and interviewed more than 230 officials, academics and scientists. They also surveyed the nation's 50 largest cities and a dozen other major water providers, as well as smaller community water providers in all 50 states.

Many consumers have contacted us to express their concerns about this study. We want to reassure you that the drinking water supply in the United States is considered to be one of the safest in the world. Current federal and state legislation mandates testing and treatment for a wide array of tap water contaminants. In fact, a vast majority of public and private water utilities provide drinking water that meets or exceeds U.S. EPA and state drinking water safety standards. Water utilities in the United States are required to issue annual water quality reports, known as Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs). These reports provide consumers with extensive information about the quality of the drinking water (i.e. the source, the treatment methods used, etc.).

Here is some more information that will help protect you and your family.

- Certified home water treatment systems can help provide additional protection against many common contaminants found in drinking water, including arsenic, cysts and pesticides, as well as reduce chemicals such as chlorine. While not specifically certified to reduce pharmaceuticals at this time, these products may be helpful in reducing many impurities. For a complete list of water treatment systems that have been certified by NSF, visit the [NSF website](#).
- By maintaining your home's wastewater system and not using your toilet or the city's sewer system as a disposal method for unused medications or other chemical wastes, you will help reduce the chance that some of these impurities will end up in drinking water supplies. Anything flushed down the toilet or dumped into a sewer could potentially make its way into our drinking water sources, and wastewater treatment plants do not currently treat for many pharmaceuticals. Properly disposing these items may help prevent further contamination.
- Many certified bottled waters are derived either from a protected underground source or undergo significant treatment during the bottled water process, which may help reduce the potential presence of many impurities. For a complete list of bottled water brands that have been certified by NSF, visit the [NSF website](#).
- NSF also offers a [fact kit](#) that provides additional information about common contaminants in drinking water, as well as tips for selecting bottled water or a home drinking water treatment system.

NSF is honored to be the authority for developing American National Standards to confirm the safety and performance capabilities for municipal and residential water treatment systems. For more than 60 years, we have remained at the forefront of writing standards for product performance, even in areas where no specific regulations exist. We will continue to work with federal, state and local government agencies, wastewater and drinking water utility officials and other public health experts to develop standards and testing protocols to help address emerging drinking water quality concerns.

For additional information, consumers can visit [NSF's website](#) or contact NSF's Consumer Affairs Office at 1-877-867-3435 or info@nsf.org.

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