

Interpreting Your Water Analysis Report

Contaminant	Recommended Maximum Acceptable Limit	Potential Health Concern or Effect of Concentrations Above Acceptable Limits	Sources of Contaminant in Drinking Water
Arsenic	0.010 mg/L	Skin damage or problems with circulatory systems and may have increased risk of getting cancer	Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards, runoff from glass & electronics production wastes
Chloride	250 mg/L	Salty taste and water is usually corrosive.	Sources of chlorides are from soluble salts such as sodium chloride.
Coliforms, Total (including fecal coliform & <i>E. Coli</i>)	zero	Not a health threat in itself; it is used to indicate whether other potentially harmful bacteria may be present ¹	Coliforms are naturally present in the environment; as well as feces; fecal coliforms and <i>E. coli</i> only come from human and animal fecal waste.
Hardness as Calcium	250 mg/L	Poor sudsing of soaps and detergents, cleans poorly and causes lime scale. Although the term hard water is arbitrary, the U.S. Geological Survey uses the following classification: 1-60 mg/l is considered soft, 61-120 mg/l is considered moderately hard, 121-180 mg/l is considered hard, and above 180 mg/l is considered very hard.*	Natural deposits
Iron	0.3 mg/L	The water will have a Metallic taste and yellow stain on anything the iron contacts.	Natural deposits. Most private wells have higher levels of iron than the Recommended Maximum amount.
Lead	.015 mg/L	<i>Infants and children:</i> Delays in physical or mental development; children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities <i>Adults:</i> Kidney problems; high blood pressure	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits
Nitrates	10 mg/L	Infants below the age of six months who drink water containing nitrate in excess of the MCL could become seriously ill and, if untreated, may die. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blue-baby syndrome.	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks, sewage; erosion of natural deposits
pH value	6.5 to 8.5 s.u.	The amount of acid in water. 7.0 is neutral; pH values below 6.5 may result in corrosive water; pH values above 7.5 may indicate hard water.	Natural balance of acid and alkalinity
Sodium	20 mg/L	May contribute to high blood pressure in higher concentrations.	Erosion of natural deposits
Sulfate	250 mg/L	High concentrations could cause a cathartic (laxative) effect. Water will have a medicinal taste.	Erosion of natural deposits
Total Dissolved Solids	500 mg/L	May settle in and build-up scale in pipes and water heaters.	Natural deposits

¹ Fecal coliform and *E. coli* are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Disease-causing microbes (pathogens) in these wastes can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. These pathogens may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, and people with severely compromised immune systems.

*This information provided by the American Society for Testing & Materials, Manual on Water, Third Edition and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.