

Chloramines – Frequently Asked Questions

When will the conversion take place?

The Van Alstyne water system demand is near the capacity of the system. The conversion to chloramines is anticipated to require significant flushing of water mains to maintain quality water service. The conversion will be delayed until such time as the ability to meet daily demands to include flushing system mains can be met.

What is the current drinking water disinfection method?

The current method of disinfection used is chlorination. In this process, chlorine is added to drinking water at a controlled level. Chlorination is an effective way to kill many kinds of bacteria and other germs that may be harmful to your health.

What is chloramination?

Chloramine is a type of disinfectant consisting of both chlorine and ammonia used in drinking water to remove bacteria and viruses. In the chloramination process, ammonia is added to the water at a carefully controlled level. The chlorine and ammonia react chemically to produce chloramines. Chloramination is as effective as chlorine in killing many kinds of bacteria and other germs that may be harmful to personal health.

Why convert from chlorine to chloramines?

Chloramination reduces the level of certain byproducts of the chlorination process. These byproducts, called Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) and Haloacetic Acids (HAAs), result from the reaction of chlorine with small amounts of naturally occurring organic substances in drinking water.

The City of Van Alstyne receives water from the Collin Grayson Municipal Alliance (CGMA) that is disinfected with chloramines. Converting our system entirely to chloramines will make blending the water more efficient.

Utilizing chloramine disinfection will reduce the quantity of disinfection byproducts that occur in the water system.

Ultimately, once the conversion is final, citizens generally prefer the taste and reduced odor of water disinfected with chloramines.

Is chloramination safe?

Yes. Chloraminated drinking water is safe for drinking, cooking, bathing, and other daily water uses. There are, however, some identified groups who have been notified and may need to take certain precautions with chloramine disinfected water. The EPA recognizes chloramines as an appropriate disinfectant for public water systems.

Will I notice a change in my water?

During the initial conversion from chlorine disinfection to chloramine disinfection, it is anticipated that consumers may notice some color in their water. The city will be flushing that colored water from the system to minimize the transition. After the conversion, customers should notice no difference. Chloramine water has no odor or taste. The chlorine smell and taste in our water should be less apparent.

Can children and pregnant women drink chloraminated water?

Yes, everyone can drink water containing chloramine.

How are kidney dialysis patients affected by chloramines and what precautions should they take?

Chloramines are harmful when they go directly into the bloodstream. In the dialysis process, the water mixes with blood across a permeable membrane. For this reason, both chloramines and chlorine are toxic in dialysis water and must be removed from water used in dialysis machines. Medical centers that perform dialysis are responsible for purifying water used in their dialysis machines. The City of Van Alstyne has notified all medical facilities in advance of conversion to chloramine disinfection. There are no known dialysis facilities in the city. All citizens have been notified of the change anticipated. Customers with home dialysis equipment should contact their physicians and check with equipment manufacturers for more information.

How are fish affected by chloramines and what precautions should fish owners take?

Fish take chloramines directly into their bloodstream. Therefore, chloramines should be removed from water used in aquariums, fish tanks, and ponds. Individuals or businesses that keep fish or other animals in tanks, aquariums, or ponds should ask a pet supply company about removing chloramines. Customers who use drinking water for aquaculture purposes (growing plants in water tanks or ponds) should get expert advice regarding the need and procedures to neutralize or remove chloramines. Also, restaurants and grocery stores with lobster tanks must take special precautions to treat the water.

Is it safe to wash open wounds with chloraminated water?

Yes. Chloraminated water is completely safe to use on cuts and wounds. Water cannot enter the bloodstream through an open cut.

Do home water softeners remove chloramine?

Most softeners are not designed to remove chloramine.

Will chloramination affect household water uses?

No. It will not affect routine water use, including food preparation, household laundering, dishwashing, watering plants, etc. Chloramines are normally removed by the high chlorine demand in soil, so they have no effect on plants.

Will chloramination affect business water users?

Businesses and other establishments that use municipal drinking water for commercial laundering, laboratory procedures, and other processes that require carefully controlled water characteristics should get advice from equipment manufacturers or other suppliers regarding any changes that may be needed. These types of businesses may include laboratories, microchip manufacturers, biotech companies, soft drink bottlers, photography labs, and restaurants or seafood suppliers with fish tanks.

Will chloramines affect the use of swimming pools?

No. Swimming pool managers and owners will still need a free-chlorine residual to retard algae and bacterial growth. Contact your local pool suppliers for specific details.

Can I call if I have more questions?

Contact the City of Van Alstyne at 903-482-5426.

Questions can also be emailed to waterquality@cityofvanalstyne.us