

CITY OF BURNSVILLE

drinking water quality REPORT



City Of
Burnsville

For testing completed in
2019



2019 DRINKING WATER REPORT

This report contains important information about your drinking water. Have someone translate it for you, or speak with someone who understands it.

Información importante. Si no la entiende, haga que alguien se la traduzca ahora.

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هذا التقرير يحتوي على معلومات مهمة عن ماء الشرب الذي تستخدمه. اطلب من شخص ما ان يترجمه لك لو يستطيع فهمه.

រាយការណ៍នេះ មានសារៈសំខាន់ណាស់ គិតស្តាប់អំពីទីកន្លែងដែលលោក-
អ្នកទទួលបាន ។ ចូររកជនណាម្នាក់ឱ្យបកប្រែជូនលោក-អ្នក
ឬក៏និយាយជាមួយជនណាម្នាក់ ដែលយល់នូវន័យនេះច្បាស់ណាស់ ។

此报告包含有关您的饮用水的重要信息。请人帮您翻译出来，或请看懂此报告的人将内容说给您听。

Ce rapport contient des informations importantes à propos de votre eau potable. Demander à quelqu'un de traduire ces informations pour vous ou discuter avec une personne qui comprend ces informations.

Daim ntawv teev num no muaj cov ntaub ntawv tseem ceeb hais txog koj cov dej haus. Nrhiav ib tug neeg pab txhais cov ntaub ntawv no rau koj, lossis tham nrog ib tug neeg uas paub cov lus no.

တၢ်ဟံးပျီတခါအံၤအိၣ်ဒီးတၢ်ဂ့ၢ်တၢ်ကွၢ်လၢအရၢအိၣ်ဝဲဒၣ်လၢအဘၣ်ယးဒီးန့ၣ်အိၣ်လီၤ.
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လၢအန့ၢ်ဟံၣ်တၢ်အံၤန့ၢ်တက့ၢ်.

ໃບລາຍງານໃບນີ້ມີລາຍລະອຽດອັນສຳຄັນກ່ຽວກັບນ້ຳດື່ມຂອງທ່ານ.
ໃຫ້ຄົນໃດຄົນນຶ່ງແປພາສາໃຫ້ທ່ານຝັງ, ຮລື ເວົ້ານຳຄົນ
ໃດຄົນນຶ່ງຜູ້ທີ່ເຂົ້າໃຈມັນ.

Gabaasii kun odeeffanno barbachisa wa’ee bisaan dhugaatii
qaba. Akkaa isinii turjumaa’uu gaafadhaa yokaan nama afaan
keessan dubbatuu dubbisaa.

В этом сообщении содержится важная
информация о воде, которую вы пьёте.
Попросите кого-нибудь перевести для вас
это сообщение или поговорите с
человеком, который понимает его
содержание.

Warbixintan waxay wadataa macluumaad muhiim ah ee la
xiriira biyaha aad cabtid. Cid ha kuu tarjunto ama la hadl cid
fahmaysa.

Tài liệu này có tin tức quan trọng về nước
uống của quý vị. Hãy nhờ người dịch cho
quý vị, hoặc hỏi người nào hiểu tài liệu
này.

Making Safe Drinking Water



Your drinking water comes from the following groundwater and surface water sources: surface water drawn from Kraemer Quarry and your system has 14 wells ranging from 298 to 1030 feet deep, that draw water from the Prairie Du Chien-Jordan, Mt. Simon, Tunnel City-Mt.Simon and Jordan aquifers.

The City of Burnsville works hard to provide you with safe and reliable drinking water that meets federal and state water quality requirements. The purpose of this report is to provide you with information on your drinking water and how to protect our precious water resources.

Contact Linda Mullen, Utilities Superintendent, at 952-895-4552 or linda.mullen@burnsvillemn.gov if you have questions about Burnsville's drinking water. You can also ask for information about how you can take part in decisions that may affect water quality.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets safe drinking water standards. These standards limit the amounts of specific contaminants allowed in drinking water. This ensures that tap water is safe to drink for most people. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates the amount of certain contaminants in bottled water. Bottled water must provide the same public health protection as public tap water.

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 water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

Burnsville Monitoring Results

This report contains our monitoring results from January 1 to December 31, 2019.

The City works with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to test drinking water for more than 100 contaminants. It is not unusual to detect contaminants in small amounts. No water supply is ever completely free of contaminants. Drinking water standards protect Minnesotans from substances that may be harmful to their health.



Learn more by visiting the Minnesota Department of Health's webpage

[Basics of Monitoring and testing of Drinking Water in Minnesota](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/sampling.html)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/sampling.html>).

How to Read the Water Quality Data Tables

The tables below show the contaminants found last year or the most recent time that contaminant was sampled. They also show the levels of those contaminants and the EPA's limits. Substances that were tested for but were not found are not included in the tables.

The City samples for some contaminants less than once a year because their levels in water are not expected to change from year to year. If any of these contaminants were found the last time they were sampled, they are included in the tables below with the detection date.

The City may have done additional monitoring for contaminants that are not included in the Safe Drinking Water Act. To request a copy of these results, call MDH at 651-201-4700 or 1-800-818-9318 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Definitions

- **AL (Action Level):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
- **EPA:** Environmental Protection Agency
- **MCL (Maximum contaminant level):** The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- **MCLG (Maximum contaminant level goal):** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
- **MRDL (Maximum residual disinfectant level):** The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.
- **MRDLG (Maximum residual disinfectant level goal):** The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.
- **N/A (Not applicable):** Does not apply.
- **NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units):** A measure of the cloudiness of the water (turbidity).
- **pCi/l (picocuries per liter):** A measure of radioactivity.
- **ppb (parts per billion):** One part per billion in water is like one drop in one billion drops of water, or about one drop in a swimming pool. ppb is the same as micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/l}$).
- **ppm (parts per million):** One part per million is like one drop in one million drops of water, or about one cup in a swimming pool. ppm is the same as milligrams per liter (mg/l).
- **PWSID:** Public water system identification.
- **TT (Treatment Technique):** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

Monitoring Results – Regulated Substances

LEAD AND COPPER – Tested at customer taps.

| Contaminant (Date, if sampled in previous year) | EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG) | EPA's Action Level | 90% of Results Were Less Than | Number of Homes with High Levels | Violation | Typical Sources |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Lead (08/30/18) | 0 ppb | 90% of homes less than 15 ppb | 2.2 ppb | 0 out of 30 | NO | Corrosion of household plumbing. |
| Copper (08/30/18) | 0 ppm | 90% of homes less than 1.3 ppm | 0.48 ppm | 0 out of 30 | NO | Corrosion of household plumbing. |

INORGANIC & ORGANIC CONTAMINANTS – Tested in drinking water.

| Contaminant (Date, if sampled in previous year) | EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG) | EPA's Limit (MCL) | Highest Average or Highest Single Test Result | Range of Detected Test Results | Violation | Typical Sources |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Nitrate | 10 ppm | 10.4 ppm | 0.44 ppm | N/A | NO | Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits. |
| Gross Alpha | 0 pCi/l | 15.4 pCi/l | 6.8 pCi/l | N/A | NO | Erosion of natural deposits. |
| Combined Radium | 0 pCi/l | 5.4 pCi/l | 3.8 pCi/l | N/A | NO | Erosion of natural deposits. |

CONTAMINANTS RELATED TO DISINFECTION – Tested in drinking water.

| Substance (Date, if sampled in previous year) | EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG or MRDLG) | EPA's Limit (MCL or MRDL) | Highest Average or Highest Single Test Result | Range of Detected Test Results | Violation | Typical Sources |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) | N/A | 80 ppb | 32.1 ppb | 9.90 - 52.60 ppb | NO | By-product of drinking water disinfection. |
| Total Haloacetic Acids (HAA) | N/A | 60 ppb | 7.1 ppb | 2.80 - 8.30 ppb | NO | By-product of drinking water disinfection. |
| Total Chlorine | 4.0 ppm | 4.0 ppm | 0.75 ppm | 0.63 - 0.82 ppm | NO | Water additive used to control microbes. |

Total HAA refers to HAA5

OTHER SUBSTANCES – Tested in drinking water.

| Substance (Date, if sampled in previous year) | EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG) | EPA's Limit (MCL) | Highest Average or Highest Single Test Result | Range of Detected Test Results | Violation | Typical Sources |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Fluoride | 4.0 ppm | 4.0 ppm | 0.59 ppm | 0.56 - 0.64 ppm | NO | Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive to promote strong teeth. |

Potential Health Effects and Corrective Actions (If Applicable)

Fluoride: If your drinking water fluoride levels are below the optimal concentration range of 0.7 to 1.2 ppm, please talk with your dentist about how you can protect your teeth and your family's teeth from tooth decay and cavities. For more information, visit: [MDH Drinking Water Fluoridation](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/com/fluoride.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/com/fluoride.html>).

TREATMENT INDICATOR – Tested during treatment.

| Substance | Removal Required | Lowest Monthly Percent of Results in Compliance | Highest Test Result | Violation | Typical Sources |
|-----------|---------------------|---|---------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Turbidity | Treatment Technique | 100 | .27 NTU | NO | Soil runoff. |

DISINFECTION BYPRODUCT INDICATOR – Tested in source water and in drinking water.

| Substance | Removal Required | Range of Percent Removal Achieved | Average of Percent Removal Achieved | Violation | Typical Sources |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Total Organic Carbon | Variable | N/A | N/A | N/A System provides direct filtration | N/A |

The percentage of Total Organic Carbon (TOC) removal was measured each month. The system met all TOC removal requirements, unless there is a “YES” in the Violation column.

Monitoring Results – Unregulated Substances

In addition to testing drinking water for contaminants regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act, the City sometimes also monitors for contaminants that are not regulated. Unregulated contaminants do not have legal limits for drinking water.

Detection alone of a regulated or unregulated contaminant should not cause concern. The meaning of a detection should be determined considering current health effects information. We are often still learning about the health effects, so this information can change over time.

The following table shows the unregulated contaminants detected last year, as well as human-health based guidance values for comparison, where available. The comparison values are based only on potential health impacts and do not consider our ability to measure contaminants at very low concentrations or the cost and technology of prevention and/or treatment. They may be set at levels that are costly, challenging, or impossible for water systems to meet (for example, large-scale treatment technology may not exist for a given contaminant).

A person drinking water with a contaminant at or below the comparison value would be at little or no risk for harmful health effects. If the level of a contaminant is above the comparison value, people of a certain age or with special health conditions – like a fetus, infants, children, elderly and people with impaired immunity – may need to take extra precautions. Because these contaminants are unregulated, EPA and MDH require no particular action based on detection of an unregulated contaminant. We are notifying you of the unregulated contaminants we have detected as a public education opportunity.

- More information is available on MDH's [A-Z List of Contaminants in Water](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/index.html>) and [4th Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule \(UCMR 4\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/com/ucmr4.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/com/ucmr4.html>).

UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS – Tested in drinking water.

| Contaminant | Comparison Value | Highest Average Result or Highest Single Test Result | Range of Detected Test Results |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Manganese | 100 ppb | 22.62 ppb | 8.54 - 36.70 ppb |
| Group of 6 Haloacetic Acids (HAA6Br) | N/A | 7.67 ppb | 6.36 - 10.02 ppb |
| Group of 9 Haloacetic Acids (HAA9) | N/A | 11.33 ppb | 8.95 - 14.61 ppb |

Some People Are More Vulnerable to Contaminants in Drinking Water

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. The developing fetus and therefore pregnant women may also be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water. These people or their caregivers should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

Learn More about Your Drinking Water

Drinking Water Sources

Minnesota's primary drinking water sources are groundwater and surface water. Groundwater is the water found in aquifers beneath the surface of the land. Groundwater supplies 75 percent of Minnesota's drinking water. Surface water is the water in lakes, rivers, and streams above the surface of the land. Surface water supplies 25 percent of Minnesota's drinking water.

Contaminants can get in drinking water sources from the natural environment and from people's daily activities. There are five main types of contaminants in drinking water sources.

- **Microbial contaminants**, such as viruses, bacteria, and parasites. Sources include sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, pets, and wildlife.
- **Inorganic contaminants** include salts and metals from natural sources (e.g. rock and soil), oil and gas production, mining and farming operations, urban stormwater runoff, and wastewater discharges.
- **Pesticides and herbicides** are chemicals used to reduce or kill unwanted plants and pests. Sources include agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and commercial and residential properties.
- **Organic chemical contaminants** include synthetic and volatile organic compounds. Sources include industrial processes and petroleum production, gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.
- **Radioactive contaminants** such as radium, thorium, and uranium isotopes come from natural sources (e.g. radon gas from soils and rock), mining operations, and oil and gas production.

MDH provides information about your drinking water source(s) in a source water assessment, including:

- How Burnsville is protecting your drinking water source(s);
- Nearby threats to your drinking water sources;
- How easily water and pollution can move from the surface of the land into drinking water sources, based on natural geology and the way wells are constructed.

Find your source water assessment at [Source Water Assessments](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/swp/swa) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/swp/swa>) or call 651-201-4700 or 1-800-818-9318 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Lead in Drinking Water

You may be in contact with lead through paint, water, dust, soil, food, hobbies or your job. Coming in contact with lead can cause serious health problems for everyone. There is no safe level of lead. Babies, children under six years old and pregnant women are at the highest risk.

Lead is rarely in a drinking water source, but it can get in your drinking water as it passes through lead service lines and your household plumbing system. The City of Burnsville is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but it cannot control the plumbing materials used in private buildings.

Read below to learn how you can protect yourself from lead in drinking water.

1. **Let the water run** for 30-60 seconds before using it for drinking or cooking if the water has not been turned on in over six hours. If you have a lead service line, you may need to let the water run longer. A service line is the underground pipe that brings water from the main water pipe under the street to your home.
 - You can find out if you have a lead service line by contacting your public water system, or you can check by following the steps at: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/06/24/npr-find-lead-pipes-in-your-home>
 - The only way to know if lead has been reduced by letting it run is to check with a test. If letting the water run does not reduce lead, consider other options to reduce your exposure.
2. **Use cold water** for drinking, making food and making baby formula. Hot water releases more lead from pipes than cold water.
3. **Test your water.** In most cases, letting the water run and using cold water for drinking and cooking should keep lead levels low in your drinking water. If you are still concerned about lead, arrange with a laboratory to test your tap water. Testing your water is important if young children or pregnant women drink your tap water.
 - Contact an MDH accredited laboratory to get a sample container and instructions on how to submit a sample:
[Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program](https://elabo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam)
<https://elabo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam>
 The Minnesota Department of Health can help you understand your test results.
4. **Treat your water** if a test shows your water has high levels of lead after you let the water run.
 - Read about water treatment units:
[Point-of-Use Water Treatment Units for Lead Reduction](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/poulead.html)
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/poulead.html>

Learn more:

- Visit [Lead in Drinking Water](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/lead.html)
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/lead.html>
- Visit [Basic Information about Lead in Drinking Water](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead) (<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>)
- Call the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791. To learn about how to reduce your contact with lead from sources other than your drinking water, visit [Lead Poisoning Prevention: Common Sources](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/sources.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/sources.html>).

Help Protect Our Most Precious Resource – Water

The Value of Water

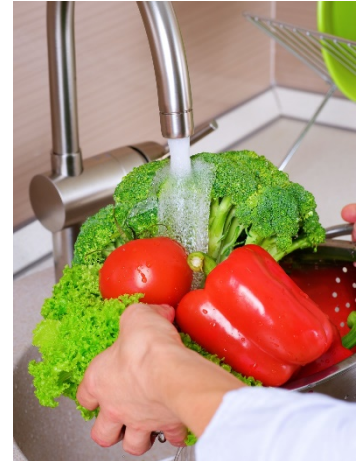
Drinking water is a precious resource, yet we often take it for granted.

Throughout history, civilizations have risen and fallen based on access to a plentiful, safe water supply. That's still the case today. Water is key to healthy people and healthy communities.

Water is also vital to our economy. We need water for manufacturing, agriculture, energy production, and more. One-fifth of the U.S. economy would come to a stop without a reliable and clean source of water.

Systems are in place to provide you with safe drinking water. The State of Minnesota and local water systems work to protect drinking water sources. For example, we might work to seal an unused well to prevent contamination of the groundwater. We treat water to remove harmful contaminants. And we do extensive testing to ensure the safety of drinking water.

If we detect a problem, we take corrective action and notify the public. Water from a public water system like yours is tested more thoroughly and regulated more closely than water from any other source, including bottled water.



Conservation

Conservation is essential, even in the land of 10,000 lakes. For example, in parts of the metropolitan area, groundwater is being used faster than it can be replaced. Some agricultural regions in Minnesota are vulnerable to drought, which can affect crop yields and municipal water supplies.

We must use our water wisely. Below are some tips to help you and your family conserve – and save money in the process.

- Fix running toilets — they can waste hundreds of gallons of water
- Turn off the tap while shaving or brushing your teeth
- Shower instead of bathe. Bathing uses more water than showering, on average
- Only run full loads of laundry, and set the washing machine to the correct water level
- Only run the dishwasher when it's full
- Use water-efficient appliances (look for the WaterSense label)
- Use water-friendly landscaping, such as native plants
- When you do water your yard, water slowly, deeply, and less frequently. Water early in the morning and close to the ground

Learn more:

- [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Conserving Water webpage \(https://www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/conserving-water\)](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/conserving-water)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense webpage \(https://www.epa.gov/watersense\)](https://www.epa.gov/watersense)

You Can Prevent Pollution

Many of our daily activities contribute to the pollution of Minnesota's surface water and groundwater. You can help protect these drinking water sources by taking the following actions:

- **Lawn and property:**
 - Limit use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers on your property
 - Keep soil in place with plants, grass or rocks
 - Cover temporary piles of dirt with a tarp or burlap sack
 - Keep leaves and grass off of streets and sidewalks
 - Maintain any septic systems, private wells and storage tanks to prevent leaks. Seal any unused wells
- **Out-of-date medications:** Never flush unwanted or out-of-date medications down the toilet or sink. Always take them to a waste disposal or prescription medication drop-off site. More information is available at [Managing unwanted medications \(www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/managing-unwanted-medications\)](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/managing-unwanted-medications)
- **Hazardous materials:** Safety store hazardous materials such as paint, batteries, herbicides, pesticides, and pool chemicals. Dispose of them at a proper waste disposal facility or drop-off event. Do not dump down storm drains, sink or onto your land. Learn more at: [Keep hazardous waste out of the garbage \(http://www.pca.state.mn.us/featured/keep-hazardous-waste-out-garbage\)](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/featured/keep-hazardous-waste-out-garbage)
- **Pet waste:** Pick up after your pet and put waste in the trash
- **Trash:** Seal trash bags and keep litter out of the street
- **Winter ice removal:** Chemicals used to break up the ice are called deicers or anti-icers. They can be harmful to the environment, corrosive to driveways and sidewalks and harmful to plants, pets and humans. Always shovel first, and then only apply deicers/anti-icers lightly if needed. Learn more at [10 smart salting tips to protect Minnesota waters \(https://www.pca.state.mn.us/featured/10-smart-salting-tips-protect-minnesota-waters\)](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/featured/10-smart-salting-tips-protect-minnesota-waters)
- **Keep an eye out for car and motor fluids:** Seal or repair any fluid leaks that could run off onto streets and into storm drains. Take used motor oil or other fluids to a neighborhood drop-off site.
- **Be a water advocate:** Spread the word; get involved. There are many groups and individuals working to protect water across Minnesota.



Reduce Backflow at Cross Connections

Bacteria and chemicals can enter the drinking water supply from polluted water sources in a process called backflow. Backflow occurs at connection points between drinking water and non-drinking water supplies (cross connections) due to water pressure differences.

For example, if a person sprays an herbicide with a garden hose, the herbicide could enter the home's plumbing and then enter the drinking water supply. This could happen if the water pressure in the hose is greater than the water pressure in the home's pipes.

Property owners can help prevent backflow. Pay attention to cross connections, such as garden hoses.

The Minnesota Department of Health and American Water Works Association recommend the following:

- Do not submerge hoses in buckets, pools, tubs, or sinks.
- Keep the end of hoses clear of possible contaminants.
- Do not use spray attachments without a backflow prevention device. Attach these devices to threaded faucets. Such devices are inexpensive and available at hardware stores.
- Use a licensed plumber to install backflow prevention devices.
- Maintain air gaps between hose outlets and liquids. An air gap is a vertical space between the water outlet and the flood level of a fixture (e.g. the space between a wall-mounted faucet and the sink rim). It must be at least twice the diameter of the water supply outlet, and at least one inch.
- Commercial property owners should develop a plan for flushing or cleaning water systems to minimize the risk of drawing contaminants into uncontaminated areas.

Home Water Treatment

Overview

Most Minnesotans, whether they drink from a public water supply or a private well, have drinking water that does not need treatment for health protection. Water treatment units are best for improving the physical qualities of water—the taste, color or odor.

No single treatment process can remove all substances in water. If you decide to install a home water treatment unit, choose a unit certified and labeled to reduce or remove the substance of concern. If there is more than one substance you want to remove from your water, you may need to combine several treatment processes into one system.

Even well-designed treatments systems can fail. You should continue to test your drinking water after you install a treatment unit. All home water treatment units need regular maintenance to work correctly. Regular maintenance may include changing filters, disinfecting the unit or cleaning scale buildup. Always install, clean and maintain a treatment unit according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Learn more at [Home Water Treatment](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html>).

Beware of Water Treatment Scams

False claims, deceptive sales pitches or scare tactics have been used by some water treatment companies. Every person has a right to decide what is best for themselves and their family, and you may choose to install additional water treatment to further lower the levels of contaminants of emerging concern, chlorine, and other chemicals in your water. However, you should be cautious about purchasing a water treatment system. If you are considering the purchase of a home water treatment system, please read the Minnesota Department of Health's recommendations online at [Warning: Beware of Water Treatment Scams \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/beware.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/beware.html).

The Pros and Cons of Home Water Softening

When considering whether to use a water softener, contact your public water system to find out if you have hard water. Many systems treat for hardness, making water softeners unnecessary.

Water softeners are a water treatment device. They remove water hardness (dissolved calcium and magnesium). Water softeners must be installed and maintained properly to be safe and effective. Learn more at [Home Water Softening \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/softening.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/softening.html).

The benefits of soft water include:

- Increased efficiency for soaps and detergents
- Reduction in mineral staining on fixtures and in pipes
- A potential increase in the lifespan of water heaters

The drawbacks of soft water include:

- Operation and maintenance costs
- More sodium. People on low-sodium diets should consult a doctor if they plan to regularly consume softened water

The production of salt brine as a byproduct. This can have negative effects at wastewater treatment plants and on ecosystems. Reduce the amount of salt brine used or install a salt-free system.



Four Things to Avoid Flushing

Don't Flush Household Items



A good reference guide for what to flush down the toilet, according to officials in New York City's Department of Environmental Protection, is to keep in mind the four Ps: poop, pee, puke and (toilet) paper. All other items should avoid being flushed. Here's a quick list of four everyday household items that should never go down the toilet.

Flushable Wipes

Though the name is misleading, flushable wipes of any kind should avoid being flushed down the toilet. Wipes could end up blocking, leading to sewage back-up in your home.

Paper Towels

You may have seen the infamous hacks of cutting a paper towel roll in half when you run out of toilet paper, especially at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. What seems like a good substitute is actually more dangerous than you'd think. Some brands of paper towels have plastic fibers that don't break down.

Makeup Wipes

Just as the flushable wipes are misleading, makeup wipes should be disposed of in the trash. These could cause back-up in your pipes.

Cotton

Cotton balls, q-tips, cotton squares, etc. Cotton of all forms should not be flushed. Cotton doesn't break down the way toilet paper does and can cause blockage.



Foods That Shouldn't Go Down the Kitchen Sink

Send These Items to the Trash

Whether you're a veteran chef or new to the kitchen, it's important to know what food items are safe for the drain. Have you ever looked up the effects of foods on your kitchen sink? Here's a list of the top foods that you should avoid pouring down the drain.

Grease, Fats, and Oils

As these greases and oils cool, they solidify. Pouring these items down the drain can cause them to congeal in the drain, therefore blocking them. Instead, try letting the grease solidify on the pan, dumping it into a disposable container, and throw it in the trash.



Eggshells

Eggshells can be hard on your garbage disposal and the membranes can be hard on them. These little pieces can also contribute to more blockage. Best result is to compost these eggshells.

Pasta and Rice

Food items like pasta and rice will absorb water when exposed. This can cause them to swell and get stuck in your sink pipes.

Flour

Flour when mixed with water can take on a glue-like mixture. Best to avoid that in the drain.