

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

The Village of Lima Public Water Supply Has Levels of Total Trihalomethanes Above Drinking Water Standards

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation. We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Results of samples collected on **August 2, 2023** show that our system exceeded the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM). The standard for TTHM is 80 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/l}$), calculated as an annual running average. The running average of TTHM for the 3rd Quarter of 2022 was **83.75 $\mu\text{g/l}$** . It is important to note that the sampling location for TTHM represents the location where the highest levels are thought to occur, and may not be representative of the entire system.

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 systems 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.

What does this mean for you?

At present, the water is suitable to drink, cook with, and bath in. Some people may wish to take additional practical measures to reduce their exposure. We do not consider these measures necessary to avoid health effects, but they are provided as options. These include using bottled water for drinking and cooking purposes, or using water pitchers containing an activated carbon filter or a tap-mounted activated carbon filter. These filters are readily available in many grocery and home improvement stores. Ventilating bathroom areas (e.g., using exhaust fans or opening windows) when showering or bathing can also help reduce exposures from chemicals released into the air.

What happened? What is being done?

The Village of Lima is working diligently to improve the quality of water delivered to consumers including a flushing program to help maintain fresh water in the system. For more information, please contact Village of Lima or the Livingston County Department of Health (LCDOH). To reach the LCDOH, call 585-243-7280 Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm or by email: dept-of-health@co.livingston.ny.us. For emergencies, you may also reach the LCDOH after business hours or on weekends by calling the Livingston County Sheriff's Department at 585-243-7100.