

# Sodium in Drinking Water

## Information for consumers and water providers

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### General Facts

- Sodium is a mineral found throughout the environment in soil, rocks, plants, food, and water.
- Sodium is an essential nutrient - our bodies need it to function.
- People ingest sodium from food in the form of sodium chloride (salt). For most individuals, drinking water does increase sodium intake.
- Sodium exists in all water supplies in varying amounts. Groundwater supplies like wells, generally have more sodium than surface waters like rivers and lakes. This is because groundwater contacts sodium-rich rock and soil.
- The amount of sodium in water can be increased by road de-icing chemicals or human and animal waste entering into the water supply. The addition of water treatment chemicals or home water softeners also can increase the amount of sodium in drinking water.

### Guidelines for sodium in drinking water

- There is no enforceable state or federal standard for sodium in drinking water. However, high sodium levels in drinking water can make your water taste and smell salty.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends sodium levels in drinking water between 30 and 60 milligrams per liter (mg/L) to avoid taste and odor issues. Sodium levels within this recommended range are not expected to cause health impacts in the general population.
- For individuals on a restricted sodium diet, the EPA recommends sodium levels in drinking water of 20 mg/L or lower. Drinking water with too much sodium can cause high blood pressure, which can lead to cardiovascular disease and stroke.
- Public water systems that serve a residential population must test for sodium, as well as many other chemicals. These systems are known as community water systems.
  - Community water systems with a surface water source must test for sodium once per year. Community water systems with a groundwater source must test for sodium once every three years.

## Recommendations to protect human health

- **Talk to your doctor.** Whether a contaminant will harm your health depends on many factors. These factors include the amount of exposure, age, genetics, and health history. If you or your family are concerned about your health or are on a restricted sodium diet, discuss concerns with your health care provider.
- **Consider taking extra precautions** with your drinking water. If you have health concerns or taste and odor concerns:
  - You may consider using bottled water or you could install a water treatment system, such as filtration or reverse osmosis treatment for the whole house or at the tap.
    - Any treatment system should be certified to reduce sodium levels. The treatment system should be maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- Homeowners are encouraged to test their water at a state-certified laboratory if they have concerns. Visit <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/dwlab> for more information. These labs can measure sodium and other compounds in your water.

## How do I find sodium results for my water supplier?

- To access your water supplier's sodium test results, visit the [online sample results page](#). For more information on finding sample results, please review this [guide](#). Sodium results are available in the annual Consumer Confidence Report that your water supplier distributes. Please contact your water supplier on how to access the latest Consumer Confidence Report.

## I still have drinking water-related questions.

For questions about sodium in your drinking water, contact your compliance specialist at CDPHE. See the following link for specific contact information: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/wqcdcompliance>.

## I still have health-related questions.

Contact ToxCall at 303-692-2606 or [cdphe\\_toxcall@state.co.us](mailto:cdphe_toxcall@state.co.us).

## Additional Links

EPA Drinking Water Advisory: Consumer Acceptability Advice and Health Effects Analysis on Sodium  
[https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-09/documents/support\\_cc1\\_sodium\\_dwreport.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-09/documents/support_cc1_sodium_dwreport.pdf)

American Heart Association Sodium Information Page  
<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sodium>