High Sodium Drinking Water Advisory

Some water system sources may experience higher levels of sodium and chloride due to the presence of some amount of saltwater at the source. For surface water systems, this phenomenon may be the result of seasonal variations, such as the saltwater wedge moving up the Mississippi River during times of low flow. These levels may fluctuate based on salt water movement and other hydrological changes.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classifies contaminants in two categories (primary and secondary). EPA sets primary standards that are legally enforceable for public water systems and also sets secondary standards that are non-enforceable guidelines for contaminants that may cause cosmetic effects (such as skin or tooth discoloration) or aesthetic effects (such as taste, odor, or color) in drinking water.

Chloride is considered a secondary contaminant that can affect the taste, odor and color of the drinking water. EPA’s secondary standard for chloride is 250 mg/L. A chloride level of 250 mg/L or higher can cause corrosion issues in the water distribution system and in customer’s plumbing. Water that has exceeded 250 mg/L of chloride should not be consumed by pregnant women and should not be used to mix with baby formula.

EPA does not classify sodium as a primary or secondary contaminant, but individuals who are on a low-sodium diet for other health reasons such as high blood pressure or kidney diseases should pay special attention to sodium levels in their drinking water. The EPA guidance level of 20 mg/L of sodium in drinking water is for individuals on a very low sodium diet (500 mg/day). Individuals who are on these diets should consider the sodium level of their drinking water as part of their daily intake, and should check with their doctor or health care provider for specific guidance about how much sodium per day is appropriate for them to consume.

The Department of Health (LDH) recommends that people receiving drinking water from water systems listed on the **High Sodium Advisory list** who are on dialysis and/or low-sodium diets check with their health care providers related to the levels of chloride and sodium in their drinking water.

LDH is actively monitoring and working with the water systems in regard to this issue.