

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER CHANGE IN DISINFECTION PROCESS City of Bushnell – Sumterville WTP

Chloramines: What's new?

On Monday, May 1, 2023, the City of Bushnell Sumterville Water Treatment Plant will be changing the disinfectant that we use from chlorine to chloramines. This change is intended to benefit our customers by reducing the levels of Disinfection Byproducts (DBPs) in the system, while still providing protection from waterborne disease.

Chloramines: Why?

For years, the City of Bushnell – Sumterville WTP has been using chlorine to disinfect drinking water. Disinfection kills microbes that can make you sick. In order to meet federal and state regulations governing water quality under the National Safe Drinking Water Act, the City is changing the way water is disinfected. The City will continue to use chlorine to disinfect water but will also add ammonia to the water to form chloramines as the chlorine residual. This process is called chloramination. Chloramination is basically adding a small amount of ammonia (less than one part per million) to water in the treatment process along with chlorine, thereby forming chloramines, or combined chlorine. In Florida, chloramines are used by at least 30 water utilities including the cities of Tampa, Ft. Myers, Deltona, and the Miami-Dade area. Major U.S. cities such as Denver and Minneapolis have been using chloramines since the 1940s.

Chloramines disinfect water but do not react as readily as chlorine does with naturally occurring organic matter in water sources to form “disinfection byproducts.” Chloramines last longer and form less disinfection byproducts. Chloraminated water is safe for drinking, cooking, and other everyday use. Most people in our community will not need to change anything they do now. **If you use dialysis or have an aquarium, you should read the additional information below.**

What you need to know if you use dialysis?

Like chlorine, chloramines must be removed from water used in kidney dialysis machines. If you are a dialysis patient or have questions, call your physician or the dialysis center nearest you.

Why do kidney dialysis patients have to take special precautions?

Like chlorine, chloramines in water used for dialysis would be toxic and must be removed. Medical centers performing dialysis are responsible for preparing the water that enters the dialysis machines. Like you, they are being notified of this change.

Kidney dialysis patients can safely drink, cook and bathe in chloraminated water. Chloramines are only harmful if they directly enter the bloodstream. Since water comes in contact with the bloodstream during hemodialysis, very strict water purification standards are already being followed by the kidney dialysis industry.

Water purification techniques used for kidney dialysis are already designed to remove both chlorine and chloramines. Industry standards require that a nurse, technician or trained caregiver test for both chlorine and chloramines after the purification process to ensure that these chemicals have been removed from the water before it can be used in a dialysis machine.

What you need to know if you have an aquarium?

Chloramines must be removed from water before it is used in aquariums or ponds. Most pet stores sell water conditioners for chloraminated water. If you have questions, contact your local pet store for information and detailed instructions.

How do chloramines affect fish?

Like chlorine, chloramines are toxic to fish and must be removed from their water. Two methods are generally used to remove chloramines from water: 1) Add specific agents to remove chloramines and ammonia, or 2) Use a high grade of granular activated carbon to remove chloramines. See your pet store for details.

Since fish and other aquatic animals take chloramines directly from the water into their bloodstreams through their gills, chloramines, just like chlorine, must be removed from water used for keeping live freshwater and saltwater fish and other aquatic life including Koi fish, lobster, shrimp, frogs, turtles, snails, clams and live coral.

Water conditioners specifically designed to remove both chlorine and chloramines are commercially available. Pet stores and stores that sell pet supplies will be able to provide information on de-chloramination products. While de-chlorination products will neutralize the chlorine, de-chloramination products will also neutralize the ammonia as well as the chlorine.

The de-chloramination process is similar to what you may already be doing to remove chlorine from your aquarium water. Some people, however, may simply let water sit for a period of time to allow chlorine to dissipate. Chloramines will not dissipate in this manner. A water-conditioning agent or activated carbon filter specifically designed to remove chloramines must be used according to product instructions. Area pet stores have been notified of the change and should be able to provide information on de-chloramination products and instruction.

Is chloramine disinfection new?

No. Chloramine disinfection has been used in Florida for over 20 years and EPA reports that utilities have used chloramines for over 90 years. In Florida, chloramines are used by at least 30 water utilities including the cities of Tampa, Ft. Myers and the Miami-Dade area. Major U.S. cities such as Denver and Minneapolis have been using chloramines since the 1940s.

Are chloramines safe?

Yes. Chloraminated water is safe for bathing, drinking, cooking, washing, and other everyday uses.

What will my water smell or taste like with chloramines?

If you notice any change, the water may have less of a chlorine odor or taste

Will there be any noticeable difference in my water?

You may notice a temporary variation in water color or possible sediment in the water for a few days following the conversion process. The effects are similar to when a water main is replaced and will cease when the system stabilizes.

Can children and pregnant women drink chloraminated water?

Yes. Everyone can drink water that contains chloramines.

Is it safe to wash an open wound with chloraminated water?

Yes, it is safe.

Will chloramines affect swimming pools?

No. You will still need to add chlorine to prevent algae and bacterial growth. Contact your pool supply store for details.