Arsenic in tap water

Toxicity and risks

Health effects

The World Health Organization (WHO) has set a maximum allowable level of arsenic in drinking water of 10 micrograms per liter (µg/L) to protect public health. This level is based on the assumption that a person consumes 2.5 liters of water per day. At higher concentrations, arsenic can cause health problems such as skin lesions, neurological damage, and cancer.

Sources of arsenic

Arsenic in tap water

Arsenic can enter drinking water through natural processes such as the weathering of rocks and soils, or through human activities such as mining, manufacturing, and waste disposal.

Removing arsenic

Treatment methods for arsenic in drinking water include:

- Boiling water to reduce the concentration of arsenic over time
- Activated carbon filters
- Reverse osmosis systems
- Ion exchange filters
- Subsurface-disposal systems

It is important to test your tap water for arsenic levels if you suspect it may be contaminated. Consult a professional water testing service or your local health department for recommendations.

For more information, visit the CDC’s webpage on arsenic in drinking water: [CDC Arsenic in Tap Water](https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/arsenic/index.htm)
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