



**CITY OF PEABODY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

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ADVISORY

CHANGE IN PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLY TREATMENT August 16, 2013

CONTACT:

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Dear Health Care Professional:

Beginning in the late fall/early winter of 2013, the City of Peabody water treatment plants will start using chloramines, instead of chlorine, as a secondary disinfectant for our drinking water conveyance system. The change is being made to improve water quality and to meet federal and state drinking water regulations.

For most regular uses of potable water, chloraminated water is the same as chlorinated water. However, kidney dialysis patients need to take special care with chloraminated water. Chloramines must be removed from the water used in the dialysis process.

What is the difference between chlorine and chloramine?

Currently, Peabody uses chlorine as the primary disinfectant chemical to kill or inactivate bacteria, viruses and other potentially harmful organisms in drinking water. Chlorine also serves as a secondary or residual disinfectant in the water conveyance system. The maintenance of this residual disinfectant is not just good public health practice; it is required by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Chloramines are created by adding ammonia that then combines with the chlorine as the drinking water leaves the treatment plants. Chlorine will still be used as the primary drinking water disinfectant; however, chloramines will now be used as the secondary disinfectant in the water conveyance system. Chloramines produce fewer disinfection byproducts such as Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) and maintain a longer lasting residual disinfectant than chlorine alone.



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How are kidney dialysis patients affected by chloramines?

Chloramines can diffuse through the reverse osmosis membrane filters used by some hemo-dialysis machines, and patients undergoing kidney dialysis could be adversely affected. To prevent this, dialysis equipment must be adjusted to remove chloramines, and the treated water must be monitored to measure the final concentration of chloramines. Dialysis facilities will need to review their dialysis treatment equipment to ensure its continued safe operation.

What should people with home dialysis machines do to remove chloramines?

Patients must check with their physician. Often, home dialysis service companies can make the needed modifications.

Is it safe for kidney dialysis patients to drink water containing chloramines?

Yes. Since the digestive process metabolizes chloramine before it reaches the bloodstream, everyone can drink chloraminated water. Kidney dialysis patients can drink, cook, and bathe in chloraminated water. It is only when chloraminated water interacts directly with the bloodstream, as in dialysis, that the chloramines must be removed.

Can children and pregnant women drink chloraminated water?

Yes, everyone can drink water containing chloramines.

Can chloraminated water be used to prepare infant formula?

Yes.

Can people on low-sodium diets or with diabetes use chloraminated water?

Yes, people with those medical concerns can use chloraminated water.

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

Yes. Even large amounts of chloraminated water used in cleaning a cut would have no adverse effect because virtually no water actually enters the bloodstream that way.

Websites for further information:

City of Peabody
www.peabody-ma.gov

Environmental Protection Agency
<http://water.epa.gov/drink/>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/>