

Water Facts

4. Chlorine



Chlorine

Why does my water smell and taste of Chlorine?

You will find a chlorine smell and/or taste associated with most drinking water in England and Wales. This is because chlorine or chlorine based compounds are added to the water as part of the treatment process. Chlorine is dosed into water at the treatment works as an oxidant to help remove metals and as a disinfectant. The disinfection process is the part of the treatment process where a water company will treat the water to either kill or inactivate micro-organisms found in the raw water to the point where they are no longer harmful to humans.

Chlorine also has another purpose in the water supply process, as a residual disinfectant. As a residual disinfectant chlorine ensures that the water leaving the treatment works continues to remain wholesome and ready to drink as it travels through the piped distribution network and arrives at your tap.

The amount of chlorine added to your water supply is dependent on a number of factors, these include the quality of the raw water, the type and condition of the pipe material found in the distribution network, the distance the water has to travel before being consumed and whether maintenance has been carried out on the distribution system. As a consequence, the chlorine taste and smell you experience is likely to vary depending on your geographical location, time of day and year, and the network it has travelled through.

How much Chlorine should be in my water?

There is no minimum or maximum regulatory limit on the amount of chlorine found in drinking water. However, the World Health Organization has set a maximum guideline value of 5mg/l. Typically we aim for a chlorine residual of between 0.2mg/l and 1mg/l at our customers taps.

You can check the minimum, maximum and average concentrations of chlorine found in the water supply in your area on our website.

Is the amount of Chlorine in my water supply monitored?

The amount of chlorine in your water supply is monitored at several points through the water supply process. Chlorine is normally monitored using online monitors at the treatment works during the disinfection process and before it leaves the treatment works. It may also be monitored if the levels of chlorine are boosted in the distribution process. We also take random samples from customer properties at a frequency determined by the regulations.

Who is responsible for adding Chlorine into my water supply?

Leaf Water is responsible for your water supply. However, unlike traditional water companies, Leaf Water isn't involved in the abstraction or treatment of water supplies. Instead, Leaf Water takes a bulk supply of water from the resident (incumbent) water company in the area and then distributes it via the last mile of pipework to homes and businesses in a specified area known as a new application variation (NAV). As a consequence, Leaf Water doesn't have complete control over the amount of chlorine you receive in your water.

Do all people taste and smell Chlorine at the same levels?

Some people are more sensitive to the smell and taste of Chlorine than others.

Will Chlorine in the water affect my fish?

Residual levels of chlorine found in drinking water are harmless to domestic pets but can affect fish and amphibians such as frogs and turtles. Fish kept in aquariums or ponds are extremely sensitive to Chlorine.

Therefore, when you're filling and topping up aquariums, you should try to make sure the chlorine is removed before the water comes into contact with the fish. You can get suitable products and advice from aquarists or pet shops on how to remove the Chlorine.

If I don't like the taste or smell of Chlorine in my water supply, is there anything I can do to make it better?

If you smell or taste Chlorine in the water from your tap, carrying out the following procedure should help:

- Run some water from your kitchen tap into a clean jug.
- Cover the jug with a clean cloth and let it stand in the fridge until chilled. Cold water doesn't just taste better, but letting the water stand helps the residual chlorine level to reduce.
- Don't drink the water in the jug after 24 hours because bacteria may start growing again making it unsafe to drink.

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