

Arsenic

Q: What is arsenic?

Arsenic is a naturally-occurring element in the earth's crust that can be found in both natural and man-made compounds.

Q: Where does arsenic come from?

The majority of arsenic ingested by humans is through the food supply. Lesser amounts can be consumed through water and air. Arsenic is more commonly found in groundwater rather than surface water such as the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers.

Q: What is the federal government standard for the amount of arsenic allowed in my drinking water?

The amount of arsenic allowed in a public drinking water supply is regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The maximum allowable limit was recently lowered from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion.

Q. Is arsenic in my drinking water?

No. There is no detectable arsenic in either the treated water or the Des Moines and Raccoon River source waters used by DMWW. In addition, DMWW's lime-softening treatment process would be an effective means of removing arsenic if it ever was present.

Q: What are the health effects of arsenic?

Some people who drink water containing high levels over many years could experience skin damage or problems with their circulatory system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer. Exposure at these levels is very rare in the United States.

For more information, call Des Moines Water Works at (515) 283-8700 or visit www.dmww.com.