



YOUR WATER.



YOUR HEALTH.



OUR PRIORITY. SM

## STRAIGHT Talk

### Disinfection Byproducts (DBPs)

Drinking water utilities play a central role in protecting public health by treating and disinfecting drinking water. DBPs are formed when chemical disinfectants used to treat drinking water react with naturally occurring materials in the water.

- ▶ Disinfection of drinking water protects people against waterborne disease. Both the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describe water filtration and disinfection as among the most significant advancements of the last century.
- ▶ Some research has suggested high levels of DBP exposure over many years could increase the risk of cancer and liver, kidney and nervous system problems in animals. A handful of studies also indicates possible risks of miscarriage or birth defects from DBPs. Other studies suggest no such risk. Experts agree that DBP health effects research is inconclusive and needs to be explored further.
- ▶ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the World Health Organization note that the risks from DBPs are extremely small in comparison with inadequate disinfection.
- ▶ EPA has worked with water utilities since the late 1970s to reduce DBPs without compromising disinfection. The water community is continuously working with regulators to support the strongest standards and regulations that reflect the most current science.
- ▶ Water suppliers report the level of DBPs in tap water to their customers each year. The information is also available on request and is frequently posted on a utility's Web site. If your DBP levels do not meet EPA's standards, your water supplier is required to notify you.
- ▶ If you are concerned about DBPs and your health, consider contacting your local health department. If you have specific questions regarding your health, contact your doctor.
- ▶ If you wish to take additional steps, you may:
  - ▶ Consider purchasing a home filter that removes DBPs. Check with NSF ([www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org)) to determine which filters are certified for that purpose.
  - ▶ If you choose to drink bottled water, ask the manufacturer if your brand contains DBPs and at what level.



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