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## Coronavirus and Drinking Water and Wastewater

There is no higher priority for EPA than protecting the health and safety of Americans. EPA is providing this important information about COVID-19 as it relates to drinking water and wastewater to provide clarity to the public. The COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking-water supplies. Based on current evidence, the risk to water supplies is low. **Americans can continue to use and drink water from their tap as usual.**

EPA has established regulations with treatment requirements for public water systems that prevent waterborne pathogens such as viruses from contaminating drinking water and wastewater. COVID-19 is a type of virus that is particularly susceptible to disinfection and standard treatment and disinfectant processes are expected to be effective. EPA is coordinating with our federal partners, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and will continue to provide technical assistance and support, as appropriate.

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### Is drinking tap water safe?

EPA recommends that Americans continue to use and drink tap water as usual.

The World Health Organization (WHO) **EXIT** has stated that the, “presence of the COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking-water supplies and based on current evidence the risk to water supplies is low.”<sup>1</sup> Additionally, according to the CDC, COVID-19 is mainly thought to spread between people who are in close contact with one another. [Read more from the](#)

[CDC about transmission of COVID-19](#). Further, EPA's drinking water regulations require treatment at public water systems to remove or kill pathogens, including viruses.

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. 2020. Technical Brief. Water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management for the COVID-19 virus. March. Website: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19>. Reference number: WHO/2019-NcOV/IPC\_WASH/2020.1

## **Do I need to boil my drinking water?**

Boiling your water is not required as a precaution against COVID-19.

## **Is tap water safe to use for hand washing?**

EPA recommends that Americans continue to use and drink tap water as usual. According to the CDC, washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds helps prevent the spread of COVID-19. [Read CDC's handwashing guidance](#).

## **What should I do if I'm concerned about my drinking water?**

WHO has stated that the, "presence of the COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking-water supplies and based on current evidence the risk to water supplies is low."

Homeowners that receive their water from a public water utility may contact their provider to learn more about treatments being used. Treatments could include filtration and disinfectants such as chlorine that remove or kill pathogens before they reach the tap.

Homeowners with private wells who are concerned about pathogens such as viruses in drinking water may consider approaches that remove bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens, including certified home treatment devices.

## **Do I need to buy bottled water or store drinking water?**

EPA recommends that citizens continue to use and drink tap water as usual. At this time, there are no indications that COVID-19 is in the drinking water supply or will affect the reliable supply of water.

## **What is EPA's role in ensuring drinking water remains safe?**

EPA has established regulations with treatment requirements for public water systems that prevent waterborne pathogens such as viruses from contaminating drinking water. These treatment requirements include filtration and disinfectants such as chlorine that remove or kill pathogens before they reach the tap. Additionally, WHO notes that, "conventional, centralized water treatment methods which utilize filtration and disinfection should inactivate COVID-19 virus."

EPA will also continue to coordinate with our federal partners, including the CDC, and will continue to provide technical assistance and support to states, as appropriate.

### **Can I get COVID-19 from wastewater or sewage?**

WHO has indicated that “there is no evidence to date that COVID-19 virus has been transmitted via sewerage systems, with or without wastewater treatment.”

### **Do wastewater treatment plants treat COVID-19?**

Yes, wastewater treatment plants treat viruses and other pathogens. COVID-19 is a type of virus that is particularly susceptible to disinfection. Standard treatment and disinfectant processes at wastewater treatment plants are expected to be effective.

### **Will my septic system treat COVID-19?**

While decentralized wastewater treatment (i.e., septic tanks) do not disinfect, EPA expects a properly managed septic tank to treat COVID-19 the same way it safely manages other viruses often found in wastewater. Additionally, when properly installed, a septic system is located at a distance and location designed to avoid impacting a water supply well.

LAST UPDATED ON MARCH 11, 2020