United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of Water
Washington DC 20460

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EPA

FACT SHEET: NATIONAL SECONDARY DRINKING WATER STANDARDS*

Contaminants	Suggested Levels	Contaminant Effects
Aluminum	0.05 - 0.2 mg/l	Discoloration of water
Chloride	250 mg/l	Taste; corrosion of pipes
Color	15 color units	Aesthetic
Copper	1 mg/l	Taste; staining of porcelain
Corrosivity	non-corrosive	Aesthetic and health related (Corrosive water can leach pipe materials, such as lead, into drinking water.)
Fluoride	2.0 mg/l	Dental fluorosis (a brownish discoloration of the teeth)
Foaming agents	0.5 mg/l	Aesthetic
Iron	0.3 mg/l	Taste; staining of laundry
Manganese	0.05 mg/l	Taste; staining of laundry
Odor	3 threshold odor number	Aesthetic
pH	6.5 - 8.5	Water is too corrosive
Silver	0.1 mg/l	Argyria (discoloration of the skin)
Sulfate	250 mg/l	Taste; laxative effects
Total dissolved solids (TDS)	500 mg/l	Taste and possible relation between low hardness and cardiovascular disease; also an indicator of corrosivity (related to lead levels in water); can damage plumbing and limit effectiveness of soaps and detergents
Zinc	5 mg/l	Taste

**Secondary Drinking Water Standards are unenforceable federal guidelines regarding the taste, odor, color—and certain other non-aesthetic effects—of drinking water. EPA recommends them to the States as reasonable goals, but federal law does not require water systems to comply with them. States may, however, adopt their own enforceable regulations governing these concerns. To be safe, check your State's drinking water rules.*