

## Definitions of Terms

In the previous table you may have found many terms and abbreviations you were not familiar with. To help you better understand these terms, we've provided the following definitions:

**Action Level (AL)** - The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

**Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)** - Highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

**Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)** - The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

**Parts per billion (ppb) or Micrograms per liter** - One part per billion corresponds to one minute in 2,000 years, or a single penny in \$10,000,000.

**Parts per million (ppm) or Milligrams per liter (mg/l)** - One part per million corresponds to one minute in two years or a single penny in \$10,000.

**Picocuries per liter (pCi/L)** - A measure of the radioactivity in water.

**Total Coliform Rule (TCR)** - A measure of testing that has been performed since the early 20th century.

**Treatment Technique (TT)** - A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

## Additional Health Information

### Inorganic Contaminants

**Arsenic.** Some people who drink water containing arsenic in excess of the MCL over many years could experience skin damage or problems with their circulatory system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

**Barium.** Some people who drink water containing barium in excess of the MCL over many years could experience an increase in their blood pressure.

**Chromium.** Some people who use water containing chromium well in excess of the MCL over many years could experience allergic dermatitis.

**Copper.** Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage. People with Wilson's Disease should consult their personal doctor.

**Fluoride.** Some people who drink water containing fluoride in excess of the MCL over many years could get bone disease, including pain and tenderness of the bones. Children may get mottled teeth.

**Lead.** Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years

could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

Lead in drinking water is rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, but it can add to a person's total lead exposure. Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. It is possible that lead levels at your home may be higher than at other homes in the community as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing. If you are concerned about elevated lead levels in your home's water, you may wish to have your water tested. All potential sources of lead in the household should be identified and removed, replaced or reduced.

Additional information is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) or from the EPA's web site at [www.epa.gov/safewater/hfacts.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/hfacts.html). The water samples we took indicate a reportable level of 15 ppb in 2 of 20 samples, which are at the allowable level of 15 ppb. These samples were not of our water system as such, but were actually taken in residential homes.

**Nitrate.** Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than 6 months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. If you are caring for an infant you should ask advice from your health care provider.