



Avoiding exposure to Cyanotoxins in public drinking water systems

May 31, 2018

Salem Drinking Water Services recently issued a Health Advisory for vulnerable populations due to detection of cyanotoxins in their drinking water systems. It is safe for most people age 6 and over to drink affected water. This advisory affects groups considered to be vulnerable to the toxin at the current levels. Vulnerable populations who should take steps to prevent exposure to include:

- Infants, children age 5 and under
- people with compromised immune systems
- people receiving dialysis treatment
- people with pre-existing liver conditions
- pregnant women or nursing mothers
- pets and other sensitive populations

If this information changes the advisory will be updated as needed.

There are no federal or state regulations for cyanotoxins in drinking water. Guidance contained in the advisory and this document are based the recommendations from Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA).

PRIVATE HOMES AND WATER SYSTEMS

Everyone may use tap water for showering, bathing, washing hands, washing dishes, flushing toilets, cleaning and doing laundry. Infants, and young children age 5 and under should be supervised while bathing and during other tap water-related activities to prevent accidental ingestion of water.

Use of well water:

- Water from wells is not affected by this advisory.

Use of tap water:

- Tap water should not be used to cook foods for infants, children age 5 and under or people with compromised immune systems, pregnant women or nursing mothers, people receiving dialysis treatment, people with pre-existing liver conditions, pets, or other sensitive populations.

- Vulnerable populations may use bottled water for tooth brushing.
- In-home nebulizers or CPAP/BiPAP components should not be washed with tap water; use a bottled or well water instead.
- Animals may be vulnerable to adverse health effects of cyanotoxins at the detected levels indicated above; consider providing animals alternative sources of water. Contact a veterinarian if animals show signs of illness.
- Most camping and home water filters and purifiers will not remove these toxins from drinking water. Only reverse osmosis treatment units are known to be effective. Carefully read the manufacturer's instructions to determine what type of process is used.
- At current drinking water levels, healthy adults, and children age 6 and older may use tap water.

FOOD INDUSTRY RELATED

Food Service and Retail Food Establishments

- Business can operate as normal, but should print out and post a drinking water notice in prominent locations where customers would have access to ice, food, or beverages that contain or have been processed with tap water.
- Download the recommend notice www.healthoregon.org/dws or use the text below. For a complete copy of the City of Salem drinking water advisory issued and updated information visit www.cityofsalem.net.

INFANTS, YOUNG CHILDREN, AND OTHER VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

DO NOT DRINK BEVERAGES OR CONSUME FOOD CONTAINING LOCAL TAP WATER

- Many food and drink items served in restaurants and retail food stores contain or are misted with local tap water.
- Low levels of cylindrospermopsin and microcystin (cyanotoxins) have been found in the water. These toxins result from harmful algal bloom episodes in the source of City of Salem drinking water, Detroit Reservoir.
- Children age 5 and under, people with compromised immune systems, people receiving dialysis treatment, people with pre-existing liver conditions, pets, pregnant women or nursing mothers, or other sensitive populations should not drink tap water or consume products containing tap water.
- This applies to City of Salem, City of Turner, Suburban East Salem Water District and Orchard Heights Water Association.
- Please visit www.cityofsalem.net for more information or call 503-588-6311.

Food and Beverage Manufacturing

- Businesses which use tap water as a minor ingredient or for food rinsing or equipment cleaning purposes in their production processes may operate normally.

- Businesses which do not sell direct to the consumer and produce ice, food, or beverages in which tap water is a principal ingredient (e.g., juice, soup, beer) may wish to use an alternate potable water source or postpone production activities until the notice is lifted.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Schools/ Daycare/Day Camp/Preschool Facilities

- Schools, daycare, day camp and preschool facilities should provide bottled or well drinking water to vulnerable populations at their facilities. These vulnerable populations include:
 - Infants, children age 5 and under
 - people with compromised immune systems
 - people receiving dialysis treatment
 - people with pre-existing liver conditions
 - pregnant women or nursing mothers
 - pets and other sensitive populations
- As a precaution, surfaces that children may put their mouths on, such as toys and teething rings, should be rinsed with an alternative water source such as bottled water. Tap water may be safely used for cleaning surfaces that children will not put their mouths on.
- Check cityofsalem.net for updated information.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Campgrounds/Resident Camps

- Campgrounds and residential camps should follow the drinking water advisory issued by the local community and/or public water system. Check their website for information (www.cityofsalem.net).
- Tap water may be safely used for cleaning surfaces in facilities.
- Also follow any public health advisory for recreational waters if issued by the Oregon Health Authority. Information on Oregon Health Authority recreational waters can be found on-line <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HealthyEnvironments/Recreation/Pages/index.aspx>.

Pools/Waterparks/Spas

Measured levels of cyanotoxins in drinking water are below recreational advisory thresholds even for young children. Therefore, no special precautions for recreational pools need to be taken.

Follow any public health advisory for recreational waters if issued by the Oregon Health Authority. Information on Oregon Health Authority recreational waters can be found on-line <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HealthyEnvironments/Recreation/Pages/index.aspx>.