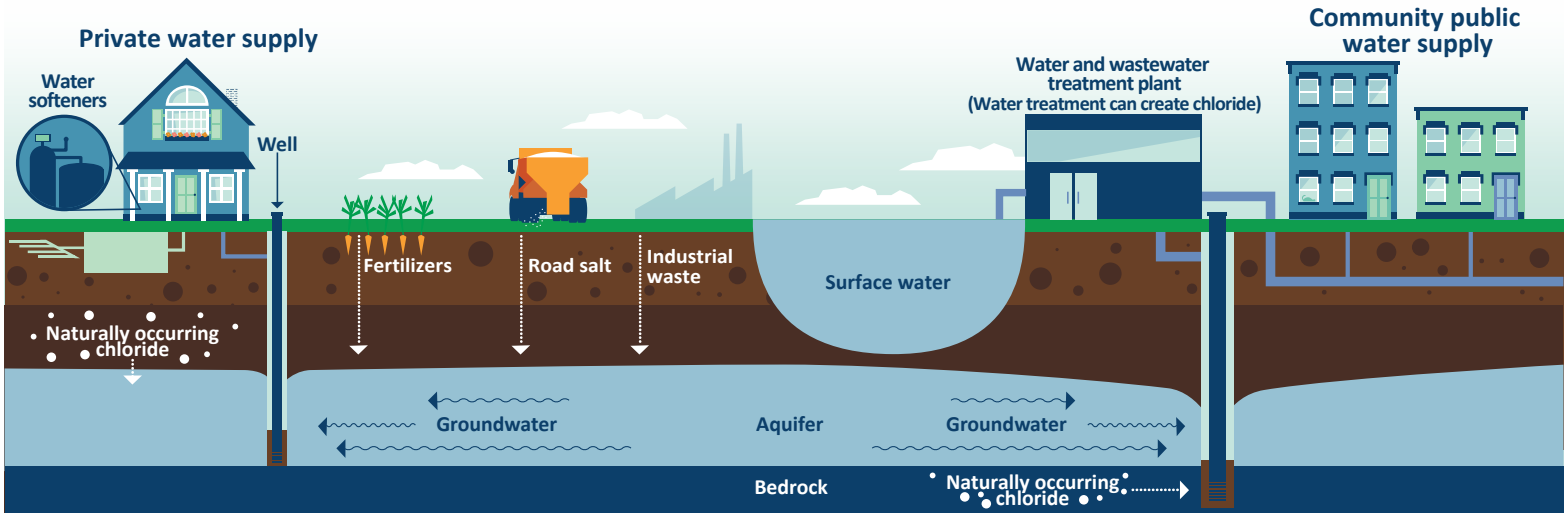
Chloride in Drinking Water

While chloride in drinking water is unlikely to harm your health, when too much chloride in water goes through plumbing, it may cause the plumbing to break down or corrode. The metals from corroded plumbing can contaminate water and cause health problems.

Tap into the facts about chloride to learn if you should consider testing your drinking water to protect your health.

How chloride gets into drinking water

- Chloride is naturally occurring in rocks and soil. It can be found in lakes, rivers or groundwater that become your drinking water.
- It is in products such as road salt and fertilizer. When these products are used or disposed of improperly, chloride can get into the water that becomes your drinking water.
- Wastewater released into septic drain fields or discharged from wastewater treatment plants could contain chloride and could seep into the groundwater.
- Chloride could be added to water by some homeowners using water softener salts.
- When a community public water supply treats water, it may add chloride to the treated water.



Problems with chloride in drinking water

- Chloride may corrode household plumbing. When plumbing corrodes, the metal from the pipes can dissolve into the water. Some plumbing material, like lead, can cause health problems.
- It may also make the water taste salty.

How to find out if chloride is in your drinking water

Step 1: Know where your water comes from.

- Learn about the different water supply types to determine where your water comes from at Michigan.gov/CareforMiDrinkingWater.

Step 2: Contact your local health department or certified drinking water lab to test your drinking water.

- If you are on a **public water supply**, the water coming into your home may be regularly tested for certain contaminants. Those on public water supply should check for results with their local water supply.
- If you have a **private residential well**, water testing is your responsibility. Your local health department may offer drinking water testing, or you can contact a certified private drinking water analysis laboratory directly. The cost for a test may vary between labs and the contaminants you choose to test for. Visit Eh.Michigan.gov/DW5tips and click "Test your water" to learn more about your options.
    - **Ask for a water test that includes chloride.** This test might be called "partial chemistry" or "complete minerals."

Step 3: Understand a test result for chloride in drinking water.

- To understand the quality of your water, you can compare your test results with the limit set for chloride (the established drinking water value) by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
    - **A secondary drinking water standard** provides guidance on managing water taste, color and smell. A level above this value may cause the water to taste salty and may cause plumbing to corrode. **The secondary drinking water standard for chloride is 250 mg/L.**

Things you can do to reduce chloride in drinking water

Adjust water softener settings. Some water softener salt contains chloride. If your softened water has chloride levels above 250 mg/L, consider adjusting the setting to reduce the amount of salt being used. Be sure to follow manufacturer instructions.

Install a reverse osmosis system. A reverse osmosis treatment system certified to **NSF/ANSI 58** with a claim to reduce total dissolved solids (TDS) may reduce the amount of chloride in your water.

- Common TDS are things like calcium, magnesium, sodium and chloride. All natural water contains some dissolved solids from contact with soils, rocks and other natural materials.
- Be sure to follow the system's manufacturer's instructions. If the system is not installed, operated or maintained correctly, it could let sodium pass through the filter.

Things you should not do to reduce chloride in your drinking water

Do not try to remove chloride by boiling the water. Boiling does not remove chloride. Water evaporates during boiling, decreasing the amount of water. The same amount of chloride remains but in less water.

For more information

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
800-648-6942
Michigan.gov/CareforMiDrinkingWater

List of Local Health Departments
Eh.Michigan.gov/MiHealthDepartment

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
Michigan.gov/DrinkingWater
Michigan.gov/WaterWellConstruction

Laboratory Services
Michigan.gov/EGLElab and choose "Certifications."

MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

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