Arsenic in Drinking Water

Drinking water is one way you may be exposed to arsenic. Arsenic can be harmful to your health.

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

How arsenic gets into drinking water

Arsenic is naturally found in soil and rocks and was once commonly used in products like pesticides. The most common way arsenic enters the lakes, rivers and groundwater that becomes your drinking water is by moving through soil and rocks.

Most areas in Michigan have naturally occuring arsenic in the groundwater. In some of these areas the levels are considered high.

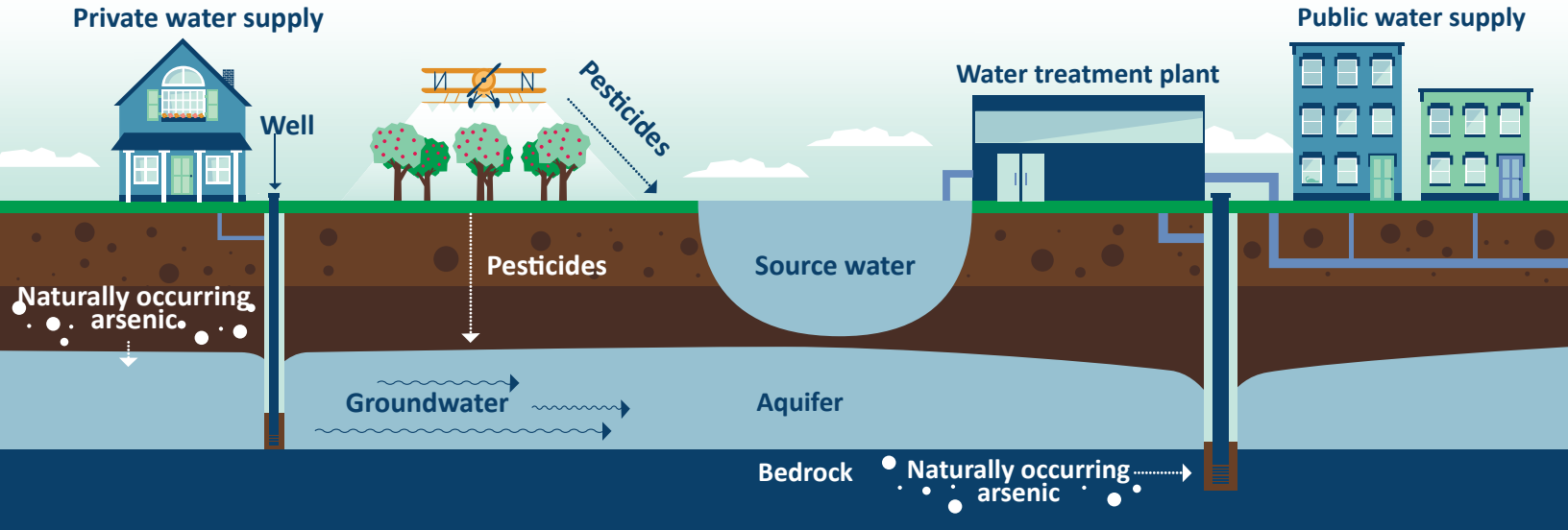
How arsenic in drinking water may affect your health

Arsenic can be harmful to your health. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends that if you have tested your water and arsenic was detected but is **under 0.010 mg/L** that you consider a drinking water filter.

If arsenic was detected **over 0.010 mg/L do not use your water** for drinking, cooking and mixing powdered infant formula until you reduce your exposure.

Drinking water with too much arsenic can cause:

- Darkened skin.
- Small corns or warts on palms, soles of feet and other parts of the body.
- Cardiovascular disease.
- A higher chance of skin, liver, bladder and lung cancer.
- Stomach pain.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.



How to find out if arsenic 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 Eh.Michigan.gov/DW-Supply-Types.

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

- If you are on a **public water supply**, the water coming into your home may already be regularly tested for certain contaminants. You should check with your public water supply for results.
- 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/DW-Testing to learn more about your options.

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

- MDHHS recommends if you have tested your water and arsenic was detected but is **under 0.010 mg/L** that you consider a drinking water filter. If arsenic was detected **over 0.010 mg/L do not use your water** for drinking, cooking and mixing powdered infant formula until you reduce your exposure.

How to reduce arsenic in your drinking water

Connect to a community public water supply.

- If you have a private residential well, check to see if a public water supply is nearby. You may be able to connect your home.

Consider a water treatment system.

- Identifying the right treatment system for your household is important. Call your local health department, MDHHS or visit our website at Eh.Michigan.gov/DWFilters for information to help you identify a treatment system that fits your household needs and budget.
- To reduce the exposure to arsenic from drinking water, MDHHS recommends the use of a treatment system certified to **NSF/ANSI standard 53** or **NSF/ANSI standard 58** with a claim to reduce arsenic. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance.
- Treatment systems need to be regularly maintained to remain effective. MDHHS recommends routinely testing drinking water after installing a water system to verify arsenic is reduced. Call MDHHS at 800-648-6942 if you have questions about your test results.
- Filters are made to reduce arsenic, but do not guarantee that all arsenic will be removed from your drinking water. It is important to follow manufacturer's directions.

Replace your private residential well.

- It may be possible to drill a new well to find a lower level of arsenic. Talk to your local health department to discuss this option.

For More Information

MDHHS Environmental Health Hotline
800-648-6942
Michigan.gov/CareforMiDrinkingWater

List of local health departments
Eh.Michigan.gov/MiHealthDepartment

Laboratory Services
Michigan.gov/EGLElab

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

MDHHS Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

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