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Ohio EPA Educates About Fluoride in Well Water For Ground Water Awareness Week - March 11-17

Ohio EPA has issued a ground water quality report to provide [information about fluoride](#) in Ohio's ground waters, available for Ground Water Awareness Week 2012, which is March 11 through 17. The report on Ohio EPA's website is the first in a series of reports on ground water quality.

The report and an accompanying fact sheet cover information about safe fluoride drinking water levels for wells, health effects, how fluoride gets into Ohio's ground waters and a map that shows how fluoride concentrations are distributed in ground water throughout Ohio.

Fluoride occurs in ground water when water flows through rocks and minerals, dissolves the fluoride and carries it along with ground waters. Human activity can increase fluoride levels. Discharges from septic or sewage treatment facilities, which process fluoridated water also can have an effect.

The maximum contaminant level (the safe level established by U.S. EPA) for fluoride in public drinking water is 4 milligrams per liter. Public water systems are required to reduce these levels if tests detect an exceedence. The same level has been adopted by the Ohio Department of Health as a private water system standard for homes and smaller facilities not served by public water systems. In Ohio, higher natural fluoride levels can be found in the northwestern part of the state. In this area, highest detections have been found to exceed the secondary or aesthetic drinking water level (can affect taste, smell or clarity) but not the maximum contaminant level (MCL).

If fluoride levels in well water test above 4 milligrams per liter, treatment is recommended to reduce concentrations. If levels are between 2 and 4 milligrams per liter, concentrations don't pose a health risk but could cause tooth mottling. Ohio EPA recommends well water users with concerns discuss health risks with a doctor or dentist, particularly if young children reside in the home. [For more information](#), check the Ohio Department of Health website.

To reduce fluoride levels, options include: using bottled drinking water; hooking up to a public water system where available; or installing treatment equipment used to reduce fluoride levels in well water.

Many public drinking water supplies are fluoridated to help prevent cavities. Exposure to fluoride levels above the MCL can harm tooth development and cause dental and skeletal fluorosis. Currently, 92 percent of Ohioans are served by fluoridated public water supplies. The target range for fluoride concentration for public water systems is 0.8 to 1.3 milligrams per liter; however, this target is expected to be lowered at the federal level. To view the fact sheet and report, visit <http://www.epa.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?alias=www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw>.