



TASTE AND ODORS

Causes of unusual tastes and odors in tap water

CHLORINE TASTE AND ODOR

The most common reason for water that tastes “funny” is the chlorine that is added to drinking water to kill bacteria and other waterborne organisms that can affect human health.

Chlorine is used as a disinfectant and is critical to the water treatment process. In fact, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency require water utilities to maintain a certain level of disinfectant in the distribution system to protect consumers from disease-causing bacteria as the water travels from our treatment plant along the miles of pipeline to your home.

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF SUDDEN CHANGES IN TASTE/ODOR

- **Changing weather conditions and algae outbreaks** can produce earthy or musty tastes and odors. This occurs seasonally, typically in the spring or fall. When it does happen, we adjust our treatment processes to address any odors present in the source water.
- **Chlorine odors** may be more noticeable in times of high use typical in the summer for seasonal towns, however the chlorine odor can also be more noticeable in colder temperatures for towns where use does not vary with seasons.
- **Internal plumbing problems** can cause taste and odor issues in certain taps in your home. Drain odors can sometimes be perceived as the odor being present in the water. To verify if the water contains the odor, fill a clean glass (plastic not recommended) with water from the tap and move away from the sink area. If the odor is still present in the water, contact our Customer Service Center for additional

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TIPS TO REMOVE THE TASTE AND SMELL OF CHLORINE IN WATER

If your water is treated with **chlorine**

Place water in an uncovered glass container in the refrigerator overnight. This will allow the chlorine to dissipate at a faster pace. A container with a large opening works better than one that has a smaller opening. Another option is to boil the tap water for five minutes and allow it to cool. This should remove most of the chlorine.

If your water is treated with **chloramine**

To remove the smell of chlorine, boil the tap water for 20 minutes and allow it to cool. This should remove most of the disinfectant.

Another Option

Add a lemon slice or a few drops of lemon juice to a glass of drinking water.

Please Note: Once you remove the chlorine, be sure to refrigerate the water to limit bacterial regrowth. New Jersey American Water does not recommend that the public remove all traces of a disinfectant in the water supply.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

New Jersey American Water Customer Service Center:

1-800-272-1325
M-F, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Check us out online
newjerseyamwater.com

For more information on drinking water standards: Contact the EPA Hotline at 1-800-426-4791



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IF UNUSUAL TASTE AND ODOR PERSISTS

If you try the provided recommendations and discoloration persists in your water, please contact New Jersey American Water at 1-800-272-1325, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. For emergencies, we're available at this number 24/7.



information.

- **Some home water treatment devices** can cause taste and odor issues if they are not maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- **Hot water heaters** need to be flushed periodically to minimize tastes and odors. If not maintained properly, you might experience a rotten egg odor in your hot water only. Follow all manufacturer's recommendations outlined in your owner's manual for properly maintaining your unit.
- **Water that has not been used for a period of time** may have a taste and odor present. Flush your taps when returning home if the water has not been used for 24 hours.
- **Some medications** increase a person's sensitivity to taste and odors in water.

ROTTEN EGGS?

Smell rotten eggs? This can be associated with kitchen, bathroom and laundry area drains. Fill up a glass, and check odor of the water away from the sink. If you no longer smell rotten eggs, it could be the drain. Try pouring one cup of bleach down the drain.

NOTE FOR SYSTEMS USING CHLORAMINES

Some treatment plants use chloramines (combination of chlorine and ammonia) to disinfect water. The taste and odor of chlorine is much less noticeable in chloraminated water. However, each year, as part of our system maintenance, we temporarily switch to chlorine for a several weeks. Customers may notice a stronger chlorine taste and smell during this period. To reduce the taste of chlorine when this happens, customers can keep an open container of drinking water in the refrigerator. This allows the chlorine to dissipate. Change the water in your refrigerated container weekly.

