



BELLA VISTA WATER DISTRICT

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FACT SHEET - TRIHALOMETHANE (THMs)

A 1998 California study suggests a weak link between miscarriages and disinfection by-products in drinking water called trihalomethanes (THMs), specifically a high exposure to THMs. High exposure was defined as pregnant women who drank five or more glasses of cooled tap water per day with a THM concentration of 75 parts per billion (ppb) or higher. This fact sheet was prepared to answer most frequently asked questions about THMs, which are found at low parts per billion levels in many public water systems, including Bella Vista Water District's.

Q. What are trihalomethanes (THMs)?

A. THMs are disinfection by-products formed when disinfectants such as chlorine, used to control disease-causing contaminants in drinking water, react with naturally occurring organic matter in the source water. The primary trihalomethanes of concern are:

Chloroform	Dibromochloromethane
Bromodichloromethane	Bromoform

Q. Why are THMs in the drinking water?

A. THMs are the result of disinfecting water, which is essential for protecting consumers from life-threatening diseases, such as cholera, typhoid, dysentery, or giardia. The health risks from THMs are extremely small compared to the risks associated with inadequate disinfection. It is important, therefore, that disinfection not be compromised in an attempt to decrease such by-products.

Q. Are THMs monitored or regulated?

A. Yes. The EPA and the California Department of Public Health currently regulates trihalomethanes by imposing a maximum allowable level in drinking water of 80 parts per billion (ppb) on the average.

Q. Does Bella Vista Water District monitor the THM level in its water supply?

A. Yes. The Bella Vista Water District has a regular program for testing and analysis of total trihalomethanes in the District's surface and groundwater supply and the results are published annually as part of the District's Annual Water Quality Report.

Q. What is the total trihalomethanes (TTHM) level found in the District's water supply?

A. The five year average TTHM level is as follows:

Groundwater	< 5 ppb
Sacramento River	< 40 ppb

Q. How does the THM level affect pregnant women? Should they be concerned?

A. High exposure was defined as pregnant women who drank five or more glasses of cooled tap water per day at 75 parts per billion (ppb) or higher. Women in the early stage of pregnancy may wish to consult their physicians for advice. However, health officials who reviewed the THM study agreed that, in general, they would NOT advise women in early pregnancy to stop drinking water from public supplies.

Q. Can THM exposure be minimized?

A. Those concerned about THM levels in tap water can minimize exposure by boiling it for one full minute and letting it cool before drinking or by using a home water treatment device that is officially certified by NSF International as effective to remove THMs.

Q. Where can I get more information?

A. The EPA Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) is available to answer questions from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. eastern time EST Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays). Brochures and other materials may also be requested through the hotline. In addition, the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water at EPA maintains a web site with information on drinking water. The address is <http://www.epa.gov/OGWDW/>.

Q. Should I be concerned about the quality of the District's drinking water? What about the THM levels?

A. The Bella Vista Water District employs State-certified water treatment plant operators who assure that water treatment operations, including a regular program of water analysis and system inspection, provide excellent quality water 365 days a year.

THM levels for all source water within the District fall below 40 parts per billion (ppb) which is lower than what is currently defined as high exposure for pregnant women - five or more glasses of cooled tap water per day at 75 parts per billion (ppb) or higher.

You may obtain a copy of the District's Annual Water Quality Report from our web site:

<http://www.bvwd.org/water-quality-reports.htm>