Fact Sheet for Medical Professionals

Preparing for Chloramines

In early spring 2011, the following water utilities: Archdale, Burlington, Greensboro, High Point, Jamestown, Randleman, Reidsville, and the Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority will embark on a modification of their current water treatment process. The new process will involve switching the disinfectant product from chlorine to chloramines to comply with new federal regulatory standards. Chloraminated water is safe for drinking, bathing, cooking, and all other uses we have for water every day. However, there are three groups that need to take special precautions when using chloraminated water: kidney dialysis patients, fish pond and aquarium owners, and specialized businesses using highly treated water.

What are chloramines?

Chloramines are a disinfectant used to treat drinking water. They are formed by mixing chlorine with ammonia at carefully controlled levels. Similar to chlorine, chloramines are effective at killing harmful bacteria and other germs. Chloramines have been used safely in the United States for many years.

What do dialysis patients and providers need to know?

Similar to chlorine, chloramines can harm kidney dialysis patients during the dialysis process if they are not removed before entering the bloodstream. Dialysis units must be prepared for the anticipated chloramines concentration of 2-4 milligrams per liter. The removal of chloramine before the dialysis process is typically achieved by one of two methods; by adding ascorbic acid or by using a granular-activated carbon filtration system, which is specifically designed to remove chloramines.

Is it safe for kidney dialysis patients to drink water containing chloramines?

Yes, it is safe for kidney dialysis patients to drink chloraminated water. During the digestive process, chloramines are metabolized before reaching the bloodstream. Everyone including pregnant women, young children, and the elderly can drink, cook, and bathe in chloraminated water.

What should people with home dialysis machines do to remove chloramines?

If using chloraminated water, remember to contact a physician first for proper water treatment recommendations. Often, home dialysis service companies can be helpful in making necessary modifications to equipment.

Is it safe to wash open wounds with chloraminated water?

Yes. Chloraminated water is completely safe to use on cuts and wounds because no water enters the bloodstream.

Will chloraminated water interact with my medication?

There is no known interactions between chloraminated water and any kind of medication.

Can people with kidney ailments, low-sodium diets or with diabetes use chloraminated water?

Yes, individuals with kidney ailments, low-sodium diets or diabetes can use chloraminated water for all purposes.

Will boiling remove chloramines?

No, chloramine cannot be removed by boiling water, adding salt, or letting water stand in an open container to dissipate. Certified treatment devices designed to reduce or remove chloramines in water are available.

Resources

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Safe Drinking Water Hotline:1-800-426-4791

www.epa.gov/safewater/disinfection/chloramine/pdfs/chloramine2.pdf

www.epa.gov/ogwdw000/disinfection/chloramine/index.html

www.epa.gov/safewater/mdbp/pdf/alter/chapt_2.pdf

Water Resource Center: www.epa.gov/safewater/resource/ phone number:1-800-832-7828

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov phone number:1-800-232-4636

National Kidney Foundation

www.kidney.org/

Department of Health and Human Services Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Advance Copy of End Stage Renal Disease Guidance Document

www.kidney.org/professionals/CNSW/pdf/02-InterpretiveGuidance1008.pdf

Questions? Contact Your Local Water Provider

City of Archdale
(336) 434-7364

City of Burlington
(336) 222-5133

City of Greensboro
(336) 373-2489

City of High Point
(336) 883-3415

Town of Jamestown
(336) 454-1138

Piedmont Regional Water Authority
(336) 498-5510

Town of Randleman
(336) 495-7500

City of Reidsville
(336) 349-1070

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