



Avoiding exposure to Cyanotoxins in public drinking water systems June 8, 2018

The City of Salem recently issued a Health Advisory for vulnerable populations due to detection of cyanotoxins in their drinking water systems. The levels detected to this point are below those expected to cause illness for most of the population. It is safe for most people age 6 and older to drink Salem water. This advisory applies to groups in whom there may be a small chance of illness from the toxin at current levels. People who should take steps to prevent exposure include:

- Infants, children age 5 and younger.
- People with compromised immune systems.
- People receiving dialysis treatment.
- People with pre-existing liver conditions.
- Pregnant women or nursing mothers.
- As a precautionary measure, the elderly should consider following these advisory instructions.
- Pets.

If this information changes, the advisory will be updated as needed.

There are no federal or state regulations for cyanotoxins in drinking water. Guidance contained in the advisory and this document are based on recommendations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

PRIVATE HOMES AND WATER SYSTEMS

Everyone can use tap water for showering, bathing, washing hands, washing dishes, flushing toilets, cleaning and doing laundry. Infants, and young children age 5 and younger should be supervised while bathing and during other tap water-related activities to prevent accidental ingestion of water.

Use of well water:

- Water from wells is not affected by this advisory.

Use of tap water:

- Avoid using tap water to cook foods for infants, children age 5 and younger, people with compromised immune systems, pregnant women or nursing mothers, people receiving dialysis treatment, people with pre-existing liver conditions or pets.
- As a precautionary measure, the elderly and other sensitive populations should consider following these advisory instructions.
- People covered by this advisory may use bottled water for tooth brushing.
- In-home nebulizers or CPAP/BiPAP components should not be washed with tap water; use bottled or well water instead.
- Pets may be vulnerable to adverse health effects of cyanotoxins at the detected levels; consider providing pets alternative sources of water. Contact a veterinarian if animals show signs of illness.
- Most camping and home water filters and purifiers will not remove these toxins from drinking water. Only reverse osmosis treatment units are known to be effective. Carefully read the manufacturer's instructions to determine what type of process is used.
- At current drinking water levels, healthy adults, and children age 6 and older may use tap water.
- Water may be used for watering plants and gardens.

FOOD INDUSTRY RELATED

Food Service and Retail Food Establishments

- Business can operate as normal, but should print out and post drinking water notices in prominent locations where customers would have access to ice, food, or beverages that contain or have been processed with tap water.
- Download the recommended notice www.healthoregon.org/dws or use the text below. For a complete copy of the City of Salem drinking water advisory issued, and updated information, visit www.cityofsalem.net.

INFANTS, YOUNG CHILDREN, AND OTHER VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

DO NOT DRINK BEVERAGES OR CONSUME FOOD CONTAINING LOCAL TAP WATER

- Many food and drink items served in restaurants and retail food stores contain or are misted with local tap water.
- Low levels of cylindrospermopsin and microcystin (cyanotoxins) have been found in the water. These toxins result from an algal bloom in the source of City of Salem drinking water, Detroit Reservoir.
- Children age 5 and younger, people with compromised immune systems, people receiving dialysis treatment, people with pre-existing liver conditions, pregnant women or nursing mothers or pets should not drink tap water or consume products containing tap water.
- As a precautionary measure, the elderly should consider following these advisory instructions.

- This applies to City of Salem, City of Turner, and areas served by Suburban East Salem Water District and Orchard Heights Water Association.
- Please visit www.cityofsalem.net for more information or call 503-588-6311.

Food and Beverage Manufacturing

- Businesses that use tap water as a minor ingredient or for food rinsing or equipment cleaning purposes in their production processes may operate normally.
- Businesses that do not sell direct to the consumer and produce ice, food, or beverages in which tap water is a principal ingredient (e.g., juice, soup, beer) may wish to use an alternate potable water source or postpone production activities until the notice is lifted.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Schools/Day Care/Day Camp/Preschool Facilities

- Schools, day care, day camp and preschool facilities should provide bottled or well drinking water to possibly sensitive groups at their facilities. These sensitive groups include:
 - Infants, children age 5 and younger.
 - People with compromised immune systems.
 - People receiving dialysis treatment.
 - People with pre-existing liver conditions.
 - Pregnant women or nursing mothers.
 - As a precautionary measure, the elderly should consider following these advisory instructions.
 - Pets.
- As a precaution, items that children may put in their mouths, such as toys and teethingers, should be rinsed with an alternative water source such as bottled water. Tap water may be safely used for cleaning surfaces that children will not put their mouths on.
- Check cityofsalem.net for updated information.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Campgrounds/Resident Camps

- Campgrounds and residential camps should follow the drinking water advisory issued by the local community and/or public water system. Check their website for information (www.cityofsalem.net).
- Tap water may be safely used for cleaning surfaces in facilities.
- Also follow any public health advisory for recreational waters if issued by the Oregon Health Authority. Information on Oregon Health Authority recreational water advisories can be found online <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HealthyEnvironments/Recreation/Pages/index.aspx>.

Pools/Waterparks/Spas

Measured levels of cyanotoxins in drinking water are below recreational advisory thresholds even for young children. Therefore, no special precautions for recreational pools need to be taken.

Follow any public health advisory for recreational waters if issued by the Oregon Health Authority. Information on Oregon Health Authority recreational water advisories can be found online <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HealthyEnvironments/Recreation/Pages/index.aspx>.