



CHLORIDES

WHAT ARE CHLORIDES?

Chlorides are present in both fresh and salt water and are essential elements of life. Many people use the word “salt” when they intend to refer to sodium or to sodium chloride.

MAJOR USE

Chlorides occur naturally in ground water but is found in greater concentrations where run-off from road salts (salts used to de-ice icy roads) can make their way into water sources. As such, well owners near snowy roads or road salting storage facilities are especially at risk for high levels of sodium chloride.



HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Although chlorides are harmless at low levels, well water high in sodium chloride can damage plants if used for gardening or irrigation, and give drinking water an unpleasant taste. Over time, sodium chloride’s high corrosivity will also damage plumbing, appliances, and water heaters, causing toxic metals to leach into your water. The EPA has shown that most of the salt consumption is from food rather than drinking water. At present there are no health-based standards for chloride under the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

TREATMENT

Due to the potential corrosive water damage to plumbing fixtures, a whole-house water treatment system may be needed. Bottled water is also an option to address the health concerns posed by leached lead and copper caused by corrosive water while a long-term treatment solution is being investigated. The good news is chlorides are easy to remove from the water using either reverse osmosis or distillation.



TESTING

Tazewell County Health Department does not do chloride testing at this time. Contact information for laboratories is provided by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) at <http://www.epa.state.il.us/labs/pdf/chem.pdf>.