

## **Frequently Asked Questions Consumption of Water by Pregnant Women**

**Developed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health  
in conjunction with the  
CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)**

Question: *Will this chemical harm my fetus (unborn baby)?*

Answer: There are no known studies showing harm to the fetus as a result of consuming water with MCHM levels below 1 ppm. Although there is no information that suggests harm to the fetus, out of abundance of precaution, pregnant women may wish to consume bottled water until levels of MCHM are undetectable in the water system.

Question: *May I go to restaurants or can I cook with the water?*

Answer: Yes. You may continue to use tap water for cooking. It is also safe to consume food which may have been prepared using tap water, as with food cooked in restaurants.

Question: *I've already consumed the water, have I hurt my fetus (unborn baby)?*

Answer: We have no information to suggest that consuming water with these low levels of MCHM poses any health risk to you or your baby. If you have any concerns, you should consult your physician.

Question: *I'm pregnant; can I wash with the water?*

Answer: We have no information to suggest that bathing with water with these low levels of MCHM poses any health risk to you or your baby. Washing with soap and water is important to prevent illnesses that may cause harm to the unborn baby (e.g., flu, respiratory, and stomach ailments).

Question: *I'm breastfeeding and I drank the water, will that hurt my baby?*

Answer: We have no information to suggest that there is any harm from breastfeeding.

Question: *Does our water contain other chemicals?*

Answer: Yes, to protect public health, water contains, for example, chlorine and fluoride.

Question: *May I make my baby's formula with the tap water?*

Answer: Yes, however, if you have a special needs child, for example a premature baby, check with your pediatrician.

Question: *May I wash my baby with the water?*

Answer: Yes, there is no known risk from bathing in the water.

Question: *May I wash fruits and vegetables with the water?*

Answer: Yes, there is no known risk from washing fruits and vegetables.

Question: *May I do dishes, clean or mop, and do laundry with the water?*

Answer: Yes, there is no known risk from these activities.

Question: *I've been drinking the water since the ban was lifted, have I hurt my unborn baby or my child who is breastfeeding?*

Answer: Short term exposure at these levels is not likely to cause any adverse health effects for you or to your baby.

Question: *If I do not have access to bottled water and I'm thirsty, would it hurt my baby if I have a glass of tap water?*

Answer: Short term exposure at these levels is not likely to cause any adverse health effects for you or your baby.

Question: *I made ice after the ban was lifted, have I hurt my unborn baby?*

Answer: No. Short term exposure at these levels is not likely to cause any adverse health effects for you or your baby.

Question: *May I use ice made with tap water?*

Answer: Out of an abundance of caution, if you prefer your drinks cold, use bottled water to make ice or use ice made with water collected after levels of MCHM are undetectable in the water system.

Question: *May I brush my teeth with tap water?*

Answer: Short term exposure at these levels is not likely to cause any adverse health effects for you or your baby.

Question: *I showered and I accidentally swallowed some tap water?*

Answer: Short term exposure at these levels is not likely to cause any adverse health effects for you or your baby.

*This document was issued 1/15/14 concerning  
the contamination event for affected customers  
of West Virginia American Water Company.*