

# What's in your water?

**Q:**  
**Why do you put chemicals in my drinking water?**

**A:**  
We add chemicals to ensure the water is of high quality and safe to drink.

Chlorine or chloramine is used to disinfect the water and, in some cases, fluoride is added in to prevent tooth decay. Other chemicals are used in the treatment process to remove impurities and improve water clarity.

**Q:**  
**How do you maintain water quality?**

**A:**  
We're committed to maintaining high quality water and we follow strict guidelines to manage our water supply and catchments. We regularly test and monitor our drinking water to ensure it meets the requirements of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003* and the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG).

We conduct more than 90,000 individual tests on our water each year. Around 24 per cent of the samples are collected at customer taps in 34 locations.

**Q:**  
**Why do you use chlorine?**

**A:**  
Water from untreated sources such as streams, bores, and rainwater tanks can sometimes contain harmful micro-organisms that cause serious illness or death. Chlorine has been used around the world for more than 100 years to disinfect drinking water supplies. As a result, many waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid have been effectively controlled.

Chlorination of drinking water is a proven public health measure with an excellent track record of safety and effectiveness. It's also simple to use, reliable, effective and inexpensive.

**Q:**  
**Is chlorine effective against all micro-organisms?**

**A:**  
When used in drinking water, chlorine is effective against micro-organisms that are likely to pose a threat to your health if consumed, including bacteria such as *E-coli*, *Listeria*, and *Salmonella*, and amoeba such as *Naegleria* species.

**Q:**  
**How much chlorine is in our drinking water?**

**A:**  
The ADWGs specify that the level of chlorine in drinking water should not exceed five milligrams per litre (five parts per million).

Normal chlorine concentrations in the drinking water we supply to customers usually ranges from 0.5 to 1.5 milligrams per litre. Most people will be able to smell chlorine in drinking water from about 0.6 milligrams per litre, but some people are particularly sensitive and can detect amounts as low as 0.2 milligrams per litre.

**Q:**  
**What can I do to remove the taste or smell chlorine in my water?**

**A:**  
We chlorinate our drinking water to a level that maintains an effective disinfectant residual. Therefore, chlorine levels can vary due to the flow rate of water in the system and how close your property is to the water treatment plant.

The chlorine smell will evaporate by leaving a jug of uncovered water in the fridge for a short period. You can also use a jug that's fitted with an activated carbon filter cartridge or just pour water from one jug to another several times.



**Q:**  
**Why do you add fluoride to some water?**

**A:**  
We add fluoride to our drinking water to prevent dental decay. This is directed by the Victorian Government and endorsed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Wannon Water supports this initiative. We believe residents of our communities should get the same dental health benefits as those in major cities.

**Q:**  
**How much fluoride is added to the water?**

**A:**  
The addition of fluoride to our drinking water is carefully controlled and monitored. It doesn't change its taste, smell or colour.

Fluoride is added to an optimum dosage of one milligram per litre (one part per million), as required by the NHMRC.

**Q:**  
**Are all your water supplies fluoridated?**

**A:**  
Water supplies in Warrnambool, Allansford, Koroit, Hamilton, Dunkeld, Tarrington, Camperdown, Lismore, Derrinallum and along the Camperdown rural pipeline all have fluoride added.

The Victorian Department of Health has also directed us to fluoridate the water at the Terang Water Treatment Plant for our customers in Terang, Noorat, Glenormiston and Mortlake.

Drinking water supplied to our customers in Portland, Port Fairy and Heywood is sourced from groundwater which contains naturally occurring fluoride.

Other supply areas are not currently connected to a fluoridated supply.

More information about water fluoridation is available from the Victorian Department of Health.

**Q:**  
**Should I be worried about PFAS in my water?**

**A:**  
PFAS (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances) are a group of manufactured chemicals that have been widely used in industrial and consumer products since the 1950s.

PFAS are emerging contaminants that can persist for a long time in humans and in the environment. They are commonly found in and around populated areas throughout Australia and internationally. There is far more PFAS found in other products compared to water supplies (e.g. non-stick pans, sunscreen, raincoats and make up).

Following recent changes to international guidelines and an independent review, the NHMRC lowered the acceptable levels on how much PFAS a person can consume on a daily basis without risk to their health.

**Q:**  
**Do you test for PFAS?**

**A:**  
We regularly sample and test the quality of our water to ensure that it complies with the ADWG and take a risk-based approach to test for the presence of PFAS-related chemicals.

All our drinking water continues to comply with the new NHMRC levels and is safe to drink.

**Wannon Water –  
Here for you!**

