

# Water Down the Drain?

**Americans buying bottled water may be wasting their money. How to tell if your tap water is safe.**

These were the headlines from an article on MSNBC – Newsweek Health on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005. The article listed the 5 categories of harmful contaminants that tap water customers should be aware of. The following information is provided to demonstrate how the Mount Laurel MUA measures up.

**“Lead:** The EPA estimates that 20 percent of lead exposure comes from drinking water. The presence of the metallic element dwarves all other drinking water problems. Dangerous amounts of lead in drinking water comes not from the water being pumped in, but from the lead pipes, lead plumbing, solder or brass faucets in the home. Levels over 15 parts per billion (15 particles of lead in a billion particles of water) are considered high risk and can be devastating, especially in children and pregnant women.”

*The most recent testing conducted in our water system clearly shows that we have no problems with lead. This testing was conducted in July 2005. The levels are reported to the state every 3 years, which is considered a reduced monitoring frequency. Systems that have more susceptibility to lead are required to monitor annually. As mentioned above the source for lead in water comes from the plumbing fixtures that the water flows through. In our system, as we are a relatively newer water system, we do not encounter any lead pipes and very little lead solder. Another factor is how aggressive the water is. Our water aggressiveness is moderate so it reacts very little with pipes and fixtures.*

**“Arsenic:** This element enters the water-supply system from natural deposits underground or via industrial or agricultural pollution. Even at the levels allowed by the EPA, longtime consumption of arsenic-tinged water has been shown to pose a higher cancer risk than any other contaminant the EPA allows in water. Daily consumption of low levels increases risk for bladder, lung and skin cancer, and large amounts can be extremely poisonous, according to a 1999 report by the National Research Council.”

*In our water system we have very low arsenic levels in the drinking water. The most recent testing shows that we are drastically lower than the allowable limit of 5 parts per billion. Our highest system result was .3 parts per billion.*

**“Disinfection byproducts:** A surprising form of contamination is from the chlorine used to kill bacteria in water. The disinfectant thwarts sometimes-deadly diseases like cholera and dysentery. But when it combines with organic material like leaves or treated sewage,

it forms its own carcinogen that, when consumed in large amounts over long periods, can pose an increased risk of cancer.”

*Our water system does utilize Chlorine, but due to the fact that there are few organics in the water, there is no reaction to produce these by-products. We do receive water from other system, and we publish their testing results in our annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). Our DPB sampling plan, which is approved by the state, is representative of all water in our system, and has always been much lower than the established MCLs.*

**Microbial pathogens:** While chlorine can kill most bacteria, it doesn't always wipe out all viruses, such as the flu, or parasites that may be present in tap water. The CDC estimates the parasite cryptosporidium is one of the most common causes of water-borne diseases.

*All of the water that our system utilizes is free of pathogens. Two thirds of our water supply comes from wells that are not easily susceptible to this type of contamination. The remaining third is purchased from NJAWC whose treatment process provides for the efficient removal of microbial contaminants.*

**“Industrial and agricultural pollutants:** Synthetic chemicals from plants and pesticides can find their way down stream after being dumped by factories or run-off from farms. But unless a town is immediately down river from a major industrial plant there is little chance that enough pollutant will make its way to your tap to make you sick.”

*As mentioned earlier, the majority of our water comes from deep wells that are not very susceptible to this type of pollution. The remaining portion is treated at a facility that has enough treatment barriers in place to ensure that this type of contamination does not occur. Our most recent testing of our system indicated there were no problems. All parameters tested returned results lower than the testing instruments could report.*

*Hopefully you can see how we measure up to the contaminants listed in the article. If you have any questions regarding your water quality, please contact our customer service department and someone will be able to answer all of your questions.*

