

# ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

Reporting Year 2023

Presented By  
**Georgetown  
Water Department**



PWS ID#: 3105000

## Dear Consumers,

We are pleased to present to you this year's annual water quality report. This report is a snapshot of last year's water quality covering all testing performed between January 1 and December 31, 2023.



Delivering high-quality drinking water to our customers involves far more than just pushing water through pipes. Water treatment is a complex, time-consuming process. Because tap water is highly regulated by state and federal laws, water treatment plant and system operators must be licensed and are required to commit to long-term, on-the-job training before becoming fully qualified. Our licensed water professionals have a basic understanding of a wide range of subjects, including mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics. Some of the tasks they complete regularly include: operating and maintaining equipment to purify and clarify water; monitoring and inspecting machinery, meters, gauges, and operating conditions; conducting tests and inspections on water; and evaluating the results. To maintain optimal water chemistry, operators must apply data to formulas to determine treatment requirements, flow levels, and concentration levels to stay in compliance with regulatory agencies. So the next time you turn on your faucet, think of the skilled professionals who stand behind each drop.

## Lead in Home Plumbing

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. We are responsible for providing high-quality drinking water, but we cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to two minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or at [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).



**When the well is dry, we know the worth of water."**

*-Benjamin Franklin*

## Source Water Assessment

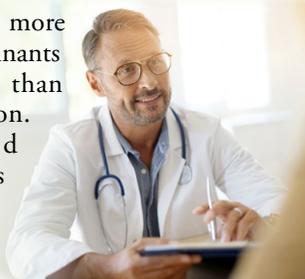
Georgetown has a source water head protection program in place to ensure the preservation of our groundwater. Mapping of various zoning laws can be viewed at [www.georgetownma.gov/](http://www.georgetownma.gov/) by way of the Planning Department MIMAPS-DEP wellhead protection. An updated Source Water Assessment Plan (SWAP) has been completed for our system and will be added to the Georgetown Water website soon.

The purpose of the assessment is to determine the susceptibility of each drinking water source to potential contaminant sources. The report includes background information and a relative susceptibility rating of lower, moderate, or higher. It is important to understand that a higher susceptibility rating does not imply poor water quality, only the system's potential to become contaminated within the assessment area.

Georgetown's water source received a higher susceptibility rating. Our last SWAP report may be found at [www.mass.gov/lists/source-water-assessment-and-protection-swap-program-documents](http://www.mass.gov/lists/source-water-assessment-and-protection-swap-program-documents), on pages 499-506, until DEP approves and updates our most recent plan. If you would like a copy of our assessment or have questions, please feel free to contact our office during regular business hours at (978) 352-5750.



## Important Health Information



Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants may be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or <http://water.epa.gov/drink/hotline>.

## Public Meetings

Georgetown's Water Department is overseen by a Board of Water Commissioners that meets monthly. These meetings are open to the public. Information is posted on the front doors of the Water Office (One Moulton Street) and Town Hall (One Library Street) as well as at [Georgetownma.gov](http://Georgetownma.gov) and [Georgetownwater.org](http://Georgetownwater.org).

## QUESTIONS?

For more information about this report, or for any questions relating to your drinking water, please call Marlene Ladderbush, Georgetown Water Department Utility Director, at (978) 352-5750.

## Substances That Could Be in Water

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the U.S. EPA prescribe regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health. Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of these contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Substances that may be present in source water include:

Microbial Contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, or wildlife;

Inorganic Contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or may result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming;

Pesticides and Herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses;

Organic Chemical Contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production and which may also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems;

Radioactive Contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or may be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

### Tip Top Tap

The most common signs that your faucet or sink is affecting the quality of your drinking water are discolored water, sink or faucet stains, a buildup of particles, unusual odors or tastes, and a reduced flow of water. The solutions to these problems may be in your hands.

#### **Kitchen Sink and Drain**

Handwashing, soap scum buildup, and the handling of raw meats and vegetables can contaminate your sink. Clogged drains can lead to unclean sinks and backed-up water in which bacteria (i.e., pink or black slime growth) can grow and contaminate the sink area and faucet, causing a rotten egg odor. Disinfect and clean the sink and drain area regularly and flush with hot water.

#### **Faucets, Screens, and Aerators**

Chemicals and bacteria can splash and accumulate on the faucet screen and aerator, which are located on the tip of faucets and can collect particles like sediment and minerals, resulting in a decreased flow from the faucet. Clean and disinfect the aerators or screens on a regular basis.

Check with your plumber if you find particles in the faucet screen, as they could be pieces of plastic from the hot water heater dip tube. Faucet gaskets can break down and cause black, oily slime. If you find this slime, replace the faucet gasket with a higher-quality product. White scaling or hard deposits on faucets and showerheads may be caused by water with high levels of calcium carbonate. Clean these fixtures with vinegar or use water softening to reduce the calcium carbonate levels for the hot water system.

#### **Water Filtration/Treatment Devices**

A smell of rotten eggs can be a sign of bacteria on the filters or in the treatment system. The system can also become clogged over time, so regular filter replacement is important. (Remember to replace your refrigerator filter!)

## Test Results

Our water is monitored for many different kinds of substances on a very strict sampling schedule, and the water we deliver must meet specific health standards. Here, we only show those substances that were detected in our water (a complete list of all our analytical results is available upon request). Remember that detecting a substance does not mean the water is unsafe to drink; our goal is to keep all detects below their respective maximum allowed levels.

The state recommends monitoring for certain substances less than once per year because the concentrations of these substances do not change frequently. In these cases, the most recent sample data are included, along with the year in which the sample was taken.

### REGULATED SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
<b>Chlorine</b> (ppm)	2023	[4]	[4]	1.6	0.3–4.0	No	Water additive used to control microbes
<b>Nitrate</b> (ppm)	2023	10	10	0.17	NA	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Nitrite</b> (ppm)	2023	1	1	ND	NA	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Perchlorate</b> (ppb)	2023	2	NA	ND	NA	No	Inorganic chemicals used as oxidizers in solid propellants for rockets, missiles, fireworks, and explosives
<b>PFAS6</b> (ppt)	2023	20	NA	ND	0.686–1.3	No	Discharges and emissions from industrial and manufacturing sources associated with the production or use of moisture- and oil-resistant coatings on fabrics and other materials; Use and disposal of products containing these PFAS, such as firefighting foams
<b>Haloacetic Acids [HAAs]–Stage 2</b> (ppb)	2023	60	NA	26.5	5.0–60	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
<b>TTHMs [total trihalomethanes]–Stage 2</b> (ppb)	2023	80	NA	48	40–72	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection

Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH %ILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/TOTAL SITES	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
<b>Copper</b> (ppm)	2023	1.3	1.3	1.09	1/20	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Lead</b> (ppb)	2023	15	0	0.0057	2/20	No	Lead service lines; Corrosion of household plumbing systems, including fittings and fixtures; Erosion of natural deposits

### SECONDARY SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	SMCL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
<b>Chloride</b> (ppm)	2023	250	NA	37.5	NA	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
<b>Copper</b> (ppm)	2023	1.0	NA	0.191	ND–1.31	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Iron</b> (ppb)	2023	300	NA	ND	NA	No	Leaching from natural deposits; Industrial wastes
<b>Manganese</b> (ppb)	2023	50	NA	14	NA	No	Leaching from natural deposits
<b>Odor</b> (TON)	2023	3	NA	2.0	NA	No	Naturally occurring organic materials
<b>pH</b> (units)	2023	6.5-8.5	NA	7.34	NA	No	Naturally occurring
<b>Sulfate</b> (ppm)	2023	250	NA	16.7	NA	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; Industrial wastes
<b>Total Dissolved Solids [TDS]</b> (ppm)	2023	500	NA	222	NA	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits

### UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES<sup>1</sup>

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE
<b>Bromodichloromethane</b> (ppb)	2023	8.15	4.21–12.1	By-product of disinfection
<b>Chlorodibromomethane</b> (ppb)	2023	ND	NA	By-product of disinfection
<b>Chloroform</b> (ppb)	2023	38.45	14.9–62.0	By-product of disinfection

<sup>1</sup> Unregulated contaminants are those for which the U.S. EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist the U.S. EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted.

## Definitions

**90th %ile:** Out of every 10 homes sampled, 9 were at or below this level. This number is compared to the Action Level to determine lead and copper compliance.

**AL (Action Level):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

**MCL (Maximum Contaminant Level):** The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

**MCLG (Maximum Contaminant Level Goal):** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

**MRDL (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level):** The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**MRDLG (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal):** The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

**NA:** Not applicable.

**ND (Not detected):** Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.

**ppb (parts per billion):** One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).

**ppm (parts per million):** One part substance per million parts water (or milligrams per liter).

**ppt (parts per trillion):** One part substance per trillion parts water (or nanograms per liter).

**SMCL (Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level):** These standards are developed to protect aesthetic qualities of drinking water and are not health based.

**TON (Threshold Odor Number):** A measure of odor in water.

## BY THE NUMBERS

 **800** TRILLION

The number of Olympic-sized swimming pools it would take to fill up all of Earth's water.

 **50**

The average daily number of gallons of total home water use for each person in the U.S.

 **99%**

of Earth's water is salty or otherwise undrinkable, or locked away and unavailable in ice caps and glaciers.

 **71%**

of Earth's surface is covered by water.

 **75%**

of the human brain contains water.

 **330** MILLION

The amount of water on Earth in cubic miles.