

# IMPORTANT NOTICE TO MELBOURNE WATER CUSTOMERS

## Temporary Water Treatment Change Scheduled

Beginning Friday, May 26, 2023 and continuing through June 23, 2023, Melbourne water customers may notice a chlorine odor in their tap water. During this period, the City will be temporarily changing its water disinfection method. This temporary change in water chemistry will not affect the safety of water for drinking.

Chloramine, which is formed from the combination of free chlorine and ammonia, is normally used for disinfection by the City. During the temporary change, free chlorine – without any ammonia – will be used.

“During this temporary period, customers may notice a chlorine taste or odor in their tap water,” explained Acting Public Works & Utilities Director Jennifer Spagnoli. “These temporary conditions will not cause adverse health effects. The water will remain safe for drinking and other uses.”

Changing to free chlorine periodically provides additional protection against microorganism contamination and helps ensure the water you receive remains safe.

## Special Cautions for Kidney Dialysis Patients & Fish Owners

During the first and last week of this four-week period, as the water in the distribution system transitions from chloramine disinfectant to free chlorine and then back to chloramines, customers who use kidney dialysis machines should be aware that their water may contain chlorine, ammonia, and/or a mixture of the two. During the middle six weeks, the water should contain free chlorine only. Other specialized users of water, such as fish owners, stores and restaurants with fish aquariums and holding tanks for fish and shellfish, along with hospitals, blood/dialysis clinics, or users of home dialysis equipment may need to take action to maintain appropriate water quality during this temporary switch in disinfection.

These users are encouraged to contact an appropriate professional for guidance on how to use the equipment during this period. The temporary change in treatment may have adverse effects on dialysis machines and may be harmful to fish and aquatic mammals if not properly addressed.

## No Other Actions Needed

For all other users, there are no precautions that you need to take. You do not need to boil your water, purchase bottled water, or purchase special filtration devices. However, if you are sensitive to the taste or smell of chlorine, you can collect water in a container and place it in your refrigerator for a few hours. This will allow much of the chlorine to leave the water.

## Where to Get More Information

For more information on this temporary change to the treatment process, please call the City of Melbourne Water Production Division at 321-608-5700. You can also find information on the City’s website, at [www.melbourneflorida.org](http://www.melbourneflorida.org)



## **A. Temporary Disinfectant Switch**

**Effective May 26, 2023 through June 23, 2023**

## **B. FAQ**

### **Why is Melbourne temporarily switching its disinfection method?**

Changing the disinfectant method to free chlorine periodically provides additional protection against microorganism contamination and helps ensure the water you receive remains safe.

### **Do other local utilities that typically disinfect water with chloramine periodically use free chlorine for disinfection?**

Temporary and periodic switches in disinfectant are a well-known industry standard, particularly for utilities in warm climates such as Florida.

### **Who is affected by the temporary switch in disinfectant?**

- Fish, amphibian, and reptile owners
- Dialysis patients

### **What actions do I need to take to prepare for the temporary switch in disinfectant?**

Only fish, amphibian and reptile owners, as well as dialysis patients, need to take special precautions. For all other users, there are no precautions that you need to take. However, if you are sensitive to the taste or smell of chlorine, you can collect water in a container and place it in your refrigerator for a few hours. This will allow for much of the chlorine to leave the water.

### **How can I remove chlorine from drinking water?**

Boiling water will remove chlorine, as will allowing chlorinated water to stand in an open container for a few hours.

### **What is chloramine?**

Chloramine is the normal disinfectant used to treat Melbourne's water. It is a combination of chlorine and ammonia that is added in very small amounts to treated water to provide continuous disinfection in the pipes and tanks that distribute drinking water.

## **C. Special Notice: Fish, Amphibians, & Reptiles**

### **Why are chlorine and chloramine harmful to fish, amphibians, and reptiles?**

Chlorine and chloramines are toxic to fresh and saltwater fish, amphibians, and reptiles. Both chlorine and chloramines pass through the gills into the bloodstream inhibiting the red blood cells' ability to carry oxygen. Chlorinated and chloraminated water is safe for people and animals that do not live in water.

### **How can I make water safe for fish, amphibians, and reptiles?**

Two methods are typically used. Either method will work:

- Drops or tablets that remove both chlorine and ammonia (available at pet stores)
- Biological filter (for ammonia removal) and chemical agent (for chlorine removal)

### **What tests will determine if the water is safe for aquatic animals?**

Test kits are available to test for chlorine and chloramine. A separate test for ammonia is also required and two methods are commonly used:

- Freshwater Ammonia-Nessler Reagent
- Freshwater or Saltwater Ammonia-Salicylate Reagent

*For more information contact your aquarium supply or pet supply store.*

## **D. Information for Dialysis Patients and Facilities**

### **How will chlorine and chloramine affect dialysis patients and facilities?**

Like chlorine, chloramine can harm kidney dialysis patients during the dialysis process if not removed from water before entering the blood stream. Dialysis industry standards require that a trained nurse, technician, or caregiver test for both chlorine and chloramine to ensure both have been removed from the water before use in a dialysis machine. Chlorine and chloramine are both safe for dialysis patients to drink, cook with, and bathe in because the digestive system neutralizes both chlorine and chloramine before it enters the blood stream.

### **What methods are used to remove chlorine and chloramine from water before dialysis?**

Two methods are typically used:

- Ascorbic acid
- Granular activated carbon filtration systems designed specifically for chlorine and chloramine removal

*For more information contact your dialysis provider, physician, or the Brevard County Health Department at 321-726-2913.*