

PLURIS-WEDGEFIELD DRINKING WATER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Is my water safe?

Yes. Although the county's test results from May indicated elevated levels of disinfection byproduct and low levels of chlorine, there is no immediate health risk or need for Wedgefield residents to change their daily routines or to find an alternate source of water. Federal drinking water standards are calculated so that a person would need to drink two liters of water that exceeds the standard every day for 70 years before having an increased chance of adverse health effects.

Residents with specific health-related questions should contact their physician or the Orange County Health Department.

What do recent results indicate about Wedgefield's drinking water?

While the test results do not indicate any immediate health risk per the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, the test results do indicate that Pluris needs to make changes in its operations to address elevated levels of disinfection byproducts, specifically Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM), Haloacetic Acids (HAA5s) and low chlorine levels.

DEP is working with Pluris to ensure the timely implementation of all necessary corrective actions.

How is my drinking water monitored?

Under federal regulations, all public water systems must test drinking water for approximately 100 different substances on a regular basis to ensure drinking water standards are met. These substances include disinfection byproducts such as TTHM and HAA5s, both of which were recently tested for at Wedgefield.

Federal standards establish Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for each substance. These levels are established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect public health and are calculated based on a lifetime of exposure.

Who regulates Pluris-Wedgefield's drinking water?

Pluris-Wedgefield's water quality is regulated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). EPA establishes federal drinking water standards to protect public health, and EPA grants authority to DEP to implement the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. These regulations set limits for certain substances in drinking water and outline when and how providers must test drinking water.

What is being done to address elevated levels of disinfection byproducts?

While Pluris' single exceedance is not a violation under federal guidelines, these guidelines do require Pluris to sample the water more frequently for disinfection byproducts. DEP is closely monitoring the more frequent sampling to ensure compliance. DEP will continue to make these results available to the community.

Additionally, the department is working with the utility to perform a system analysis to identify operational improvements to reduce levels of disinfection byproducts as quickly as possible. DEP is experienced with working with water providers to address the challenge of balancing the flow of water with the proper application of chlorine while minimizing disinfection byproducts.

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What about low chlorine levels in the water?

Throughout Florida, chlorine is used to disinfect public water supplies. The most recent test results for Wedgefield indicated that chlorine levels did not meet the minimum level established in federal drinking water standards.

DEP was on hand when the latest tests were conducted and advised Pluris of the need to increase chlorine levels. Pluris responded immediately. Follow-up testing indicates that chlorine levels are back in compliance and meet federal standards.

What about bacteria in the water?

Total coliform is not a threat to human health, but can be an indicator of the potential presence of E. coli, which is dangerous to human health. Total coliform bacteria were detected only in samples collected inside homes in April by Orange County. Coliform bacteria are not uncommon in the home around sinks and faucets. Water tests at the water distribution system have shown no coliform bacteria present.

Will Pluris be held accountable to meet federal water quality standards?

Yes, Pluris is legally required to meet state and federal drinking water standards. Whenever sampling or other evaluations verify compliance issues, DEP holds utilities accountable and works with them to identify and implement corrective actions as quickly as possible to protect water resources and ensure a safe water supply.

Why is Pluris flushing the water lines?

Flushing water lines is a key part of distribution system maintenance and is an industry-wide practice used to maintain water quality. This can be safely performed without impacts to daily use.

How can I learn more about my drinking water?

DEP staff is available to answer questions about drinking water regulations. Contact Nathan Hess at 407-897-4140 or nathan.hess@dep.state.fl.us or visit <http://dep.state.fl.us/central/home/wedgefield/>.

The Florida Department of Health has a number of resources on drinking water at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/drinking-water/index.html>.