

Arsenic Testing and Understanding Results

Instructions for Master Gardener Helpdesk Volunteers

8/28/2018

ppm = parts per million; ppb = parts per billion

Arsenic Standards for “acceptable” drinking water: .010ppm or 10ppb

Arsenic Water Testing: Refer clients to UofA Bulletin AZ1111. The 2 specific labs that perform residential arsenic tests are:

- Chandler Analytical
- Turner Laboratories, Inc.

Understanding Test Results

Following is an excerpt from U of A bulletin AZ1650, “How to Lower the Levels of Arsenic in Well Water: What Choices do Arizona Consumers Have?”

What do my arsenic testing results mean?

- If arsenic in your well water is **less than 10 ppb**, it is OK for drinking, cooking, and all other household purposes. Continue to test your untreated well water for arsenic at least every three years, using a state-certified laboratory. Follow the testing schedule for other contaminants.
- If arsenic in your well water is **between 10 and 200 ppb**, it is not an emergency, but make plans to get water for drinking and cooking from a different source, or install a home treatment system.
- Well water with arsenic levels **below 100 ppb** is considered safe to irrigate water plants, including garden vegetables, and may be used as drinking water for livestock and poultry (Ayers and Westcot 1985). If you have household pets, consult your veterinarian. Continue to test your untreated well water for arsenic at least every three years, using a state-certified laboratory.
- If arsenic in your well water is **over 200 ppb**, DO NOT use this water for drinking, cooking, irrigation, or watering animals. Use another drinking and cooking source immediately and consider installing and maintaining a home treatment system.
- If the arsenic is **less than 500 ppb**, you can continue to use this water for bathing and washing. Other sources of water include bottled water or connecting to a public water supply. If you choose bottled water, contact the supplier for information about contaminants, including arsenic, and be sure to clean and disinfect your water containers regularly. Continue to test your untreated well water for arsenic at least every three years, using a state certified laboratory.

For additional help understanding arsenic test results, call the Arizona Department of Health Services at (602) 364-3128