

Drinking Water Week

Have you ever stopped to think about how many times a day you use water from a faucet? During Drinking Water Week (May 1–7, 2022), learn more about [where your drinking water comes from](#) and what makes it safe to use.

We all rely on safe drinking water, and it's important to know how water gets to our faucets and what makes it safe to use.

Many federal, state, and local organizations work with communities to protect source water, such as lakes, rivers, and groundwater. Protecting our water sources is an ongoing challenge. Stopping sewage from seeping into drinking water sources by repairing broken septic systems and maintaining sewer systems can greatly reduce germs in our source water.

Federal, state, and local authorities also [regulate and monitor public water systems](#) to make sure water from these systems is safe to drink.

Drinking Water Week

[Drinking Water Week](#) is an annual observance in May sponsored by the [American Water Works Association](#) to recognize the critical role drinking water plays in our daily lives. This year's theme, "There When You Need It," highlights the work water professionals do around the clock to ensure high-quality drinking water is always available at your tap, whenever you need it.

Keeping Tap Water Safe





Protecting water sources reduces the risk of unsafe levels of germs or chemicals in water and the cost of water treatment.

Over the last 100 years, many improvements in the health, success, and lifespan of the U.S. population can be linked to improvements in water quality. Providing safe drinking water was one of the most important public health achievements of the 20th century. [Water treatment](#) (methods to reduce germs or chemicals that cause illness) has helped ensure access to healthy and safe water for millions of Americans.

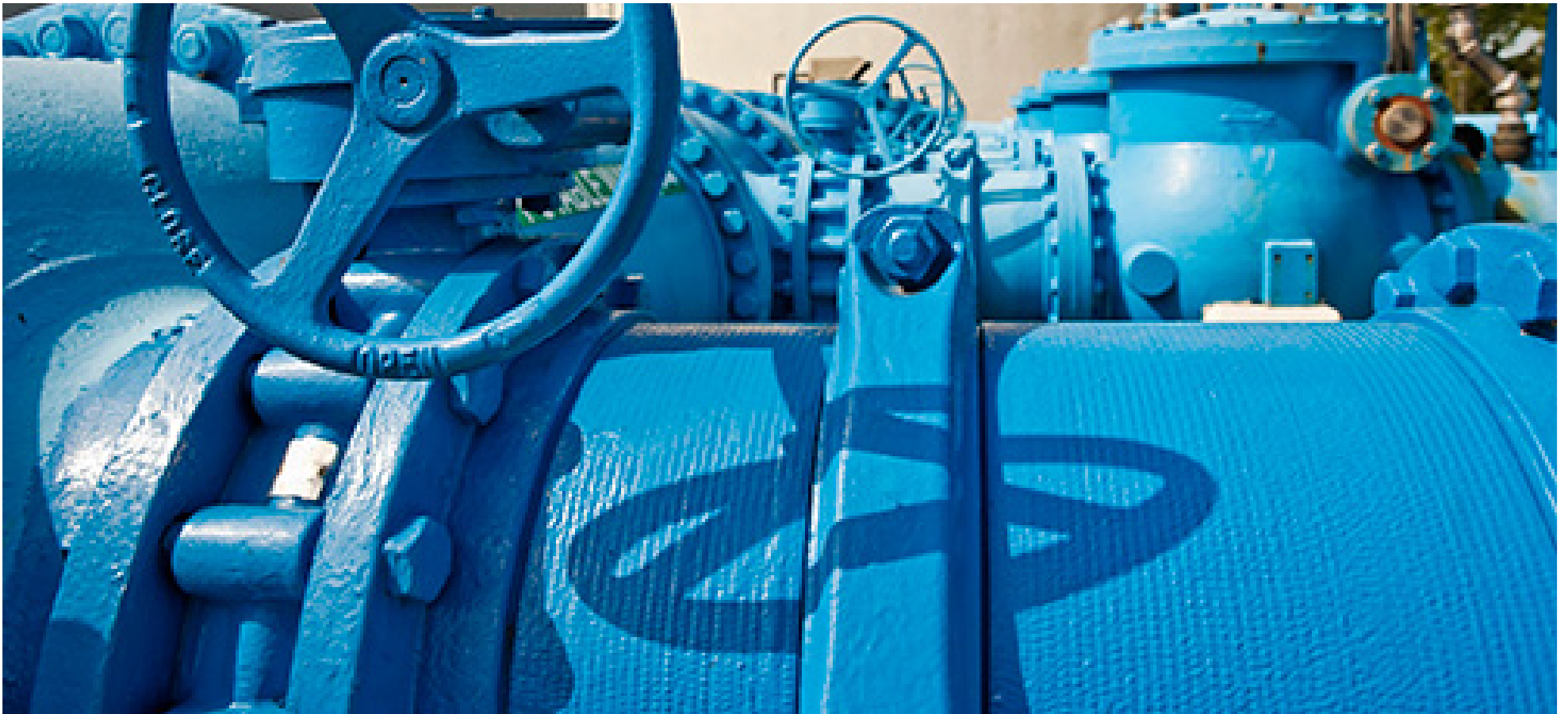
Government regulations have helped reduce pollution of the water sources that supply our drinking water systems. However, treating the water before it reaches our tap to kill or remove harmful germs or chemicals is still critical to making sure the water is safe to drink. Drinking water can become contaminated:

- In the original water source (for example, a river)
- In storage tanks
- In drinking water distribution systems (the pipes that carry water to homes, businesses, schools, and other buildings)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates drinking water quality in [public water systems](#). Every public water system is required to provide its customers with an annual [consumer confidence report \(CCR\)](#), which provides information on local drinking water quality.

In addition, CDC's [Environmental Public Health Tracking Network](#) has information and data about some of the most common [chemicals](#) that may be found in community water supplies.





Treating water to remove or kill disease-causing chemicals and germs is critical to protect the health of people, animals, and the environment.

Drinking Water and Private Wells

EPA regulations do not apply to [privately owned wells](#), although some states do regulate private wells. As a result, the 43 million Americans who get their water from private wells are responsible for ensuring that their tap water is safe from [contaminants](#). If you have a well, [take steps to protect it](#) and have the water [tested](#) at least once a year to make sure your water is safe from harmful germs and chemicals.

Your local health department or a well water system professional may also be able to help you with well maintenance, new well construction, and water quality testing. CDC's [Safe Water for Community Health \(Safe WATCH\)](#) program helps health departments reduce harmful exposures from wells and other private drinking water systems.

Water System Challenges

Some drinking water systems in the United States are over 100 years old. Cracked pipes, water main breaks, and other age-related issues increase the chance for germs or chemicals to get into the water and can lead to [drinking water advisories](#). The American Water Works Association has estimated that it will [cost nearly \\$1 trillion in the next 25 years](#) [\[PDF – 37 pages\]](#) [↗](#) to repair and expand our drinking water systems to meet the demands of the growing U.S. population.

Another challenge that can affect our water supply is climate change and warming temperatures, which can cause contamination of water sources with harmful chemicals and toxins.

What CDC Is Doing

CDC works to address these drinking water challenges through its water-related research, prevention, and policy activities and programs, including the following:

Research on Health Impacts

- [Estimating the number of waterborne illnesses, emergency department visits, hospitalizations, deaths, and direct healthcare costs.](#)
- Evaluating the health impacts and water quality issues associated with low pressure events in the distribution systems of public water systems.
- Developing improved laboratory methods for sampling, testing, and monitoring water quality.

Preventing Waterborne Disease and Protecting Public Health



- Providing support for state, local, and tribal health officials to [investigate, report, and prevent illnesses associated with drinking water](#).
- Developing guidance to ensure the safety of [building water systems and devices after a prolonged shutdown](#).
- Working with EPA, state and local health agencies, and other partners to provide guidance on drinking water policy and research priorities.
- Working with national partners to provide technical assistance, training, and guidance on improving safe drinking water programs.
- Conducting [surveillance for waterborne disease](#) outbreaks associated with drinking water.
- Developing resources for health department programs on how to strengthen services to people who use wells, cisterns, springs, and other private drinking water systems.
- Developing tools and resources to respond to [water-related emergencies](#).
- Supporting public health agencies to strengthen their drinking water programs and address problems with wells and other private drinking water systems.
- Applying scientific findings to improve waterborne disease prevention outreach, education, policies, and practices.
- Improving water quality data to identify risks, prevent exposures to harmful contaminants, and address community concerns.
- Providing national leadership on community water [fluoridation practice](#).

More Information

Public drinking water quality and your local drinking water:

- [National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network](#)
- [CDC—Consumer Confidence Reports \(CCR\)](#)
- [EPA—CCR Information for Consumers](#) 
- [EPA—How EPA Regulates Drinking Water Contaminants](#) 
- [EPA—Ground Water and Drinking Water](#) 

How to protect and improve well water quality:

- [Groundwater Awareness Week](#)
- [Safe Water for Community Health \(Safe WATCH \)](#)
- [Safe Water Program Improvement e-Learning Series: Training for public health programs on private wells and other private drinking water systems](#)
- [EPA—Private Drinking Water Wells](#) 
- [The Private Well Class: Free Online Training for Homeowners with Water Wells](#) 

Other drinking water and health-related resources:

- [A-Z Index of Water-related Topics](#)
- [Community Water Fluoridation](#)
- [Get the Facts: Drinking Water and Intake](#)
- [Promoting Clean Water for Health](#)