

EPA Water Contaminant Chart

The following chart shows some contaminants and their potential effect on humans, as well as their source.

CONTAMINANT	POSSIBLE EFFECT	SOURCE
Microbials		
Coliform and other bacteria	Gastroenteric infection, dysentery, typhoid fever, and cholera	human and animal fecal matter
Giardia lamblia	Gastroenteric disease	human and animal fecal matter
Legionella	Legionnaire's disease	natural waters, some water heaters
Turbidity	Interferes with disinfection, filtration	erosion, soil runoff, and discharges
Inorganics		
Asbestos	Cancer	asbestos cement in water systems
Arsenic	Cancer, skin and nervous system toxicity	pesticide, industrial waste, and smelting
Barium	Circulatory system effects	geological
Cadmium	Kidney effects	epoxy sealants, spent coal, and pigments
Fluoride	Skeletal and dental damage	fluoridated water, fertilizer, and aluminum
Lead	Kidney and nervous system damage	lead pipe and lead-based solder
Mercury	Kidney and nervous system disorders	crop runoff and batteries
Nitrate	Blue baby syndrome (methemoglobinemia)	fertilizer, sewage, and animal waste
Selenium	Liver damage	smelting and coal/oil combustion
Organics		
1,2,4 Trichlorobenzene	Changes in adrenal glands	discharge from textile finishing factories
Acrylamide	Cancer, nervous system or blood problems	added to water during sewage treatment
Benzene	Cancer, anemia	fuel, drugs, paint, and pesticides
Carbon Tetrachloride	Cancer, liver problems	cleaning solvents
Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)	Cancer, skin and liver damage, nausea	used in electrical transformers
Total Trihalomethanes	Cancer	surface water treated with chlorine
Tetrachloroethylene	Cancer, liver problems	dry cleaning materials waste, and solvents
Toluene	Nervous system, kidney or liver problems	discharge from petroleum factories
Styrene	Liver, kidney or circulatory problems	discharge from rubber and plastic factories, and leaching from landfills
Vinyl Chloride	Cancer	PVC pipe; solvent breakdown
Pesticides		
Carbofuran, Chlordane, Endrin, Heptachlor epoxide, Lindane, Methoxychlor, Toxaphene	Cancer, nervous system, respiratory system, liver, kidney, anemia, leukemia	insecticide for cotton, potatoes, corn, and alfalfa; used as fumigants; heptachlor epoxide converts to heptachlor by soil and water organisms
Herbicides		
Alachlor, Atrazine, Dalapon, Dinoseb, Diquat, Endothall, Glyphosate, Oxamyl (Vydate), Picloram, Simazine, 2,4-D, Pentachlorophenol, 2,4,5-TP (Silvex)	Cancer, nervous and reproductive system, respiratory system, liver, heart, and kidney	herbicide for corn, soybeans, sugar cane, and wheat; pentachlorophenol was also used as a wood preservative

Does the government assure me of safe drinking water?

