

Town of Exeter Water Department

Monochloramine Fact Sheet

To meet federal drinking water regulations, the Town of Exeter Water Department will change its water treatment process late March/early April of 2019. Effective water treatment includes disinfection that kills disease-causing organisms in water. The practice of disinfecting drinking water has made many once common diseases, like typhoid and cholera, a thing of the past in the United States, Canada and other developed countries. In fact, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognizes the control of infectious diseases as a result of cleaner water and improved sanitation as one of the top 10 public health achievements of the 20th century.

Federal and state regulations require the Town of Exeter to maintain a disinfectant in our distribution system to protect public health. The two options are chlorine and monochloramine, both of which have benefits and drawbacks. Chlorine and monochloramine both produce disinfection byproducts. Disinfection byproducts form when chemical disinfectants react with plant matter and other naturally occurring materials in the water. Two regulated disinfection byproducts include total trihalomethanes (THMs) and haloacetic acids (HAAs).

The Town of Exeter Water Department worked with New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, and the consultant team, and select monochloramine because it produces lower levels of regulated disinfection byproducts, can be retrofit to the existing treatment facilities, and was an affordable option to return to compliance TTHM levels in the distribution system.

- The Town of Exeter Water Department is committed to providing drinking water that maximizes public health and minimizes potential health risks. Using monochloramine in our distribution system is part of that commitment.
- Monochloramine is an effective, long-lasting drinking water disinfectant that reduces the potential risk associated with regulated disinfection byproducts in tap water.
- Today, more than one in five Americans use drinking water treated with monochloramine. Monochloramine has been safely and successfully used by water utilities for more than 90 years. Boston, Dallas, Houston, San Diego, San Francisco, Tampa Bay, Miami, Denver, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and many other cities are all successfully using monochloramine to treat drinking water. In New Hampshire Concord, Manchester, Salem, & Hillsborough use monochloramines.
- While monochloramine is safe for drinking, cooking, and all typical uses, there are special circumstances where monochloramine must be removed. **Monochloramine must be removed from water used for kidney dialysis and from water used when keeping pets like fish and some amphibians.**
- The World Health Organization and the US EPA consider monochloramine a safe, effective treatment method of reducing the potential health risk from prolonged exposure to regulated disinfection byproducts.
- Utilities that use monochloramine often experience fewer taste and odor complaints than utilities using free chlorine.

Questions or concerns regarding this process can be directed to the Water Sewer Manager or Water Treatment Supervisor at 773-6157 between 7 am-3 pm or publicworks@exeternh.gov.