

# Coachella Valley Arsenic Fact Sheet

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) and Desert Water Agency (DWA) are committed to providing high quality drinking water that meets stringent federal and state drinking water quality standards. CVWD and DWA test nearly 20,000 water samples annually to ensure drinking water standard compliance. Samples are analyzed for more than 100 regulated and unrelated substances with tests performed by highly trained employees in state-certified laboratories. Below is more information about arsenic, which is among the substances found naturally in Coachella Valley's groundwater supply.

## **What is arsenic?**

Arsenic is an odorless and tasteless mineral naturally found in plants, rocks, soil, air, animals and water.

## **Is there arsenic in Coachella Valley Water District's drinking water?**

Most areas of the Coachella Valley have non-detectable levels of arsenic in the groundwater. However, naturally occurring arsenic is commonly found in groundwater in Mecca, Oasis, Valerie Jean and North Shore at levels higher than current state and federal drinking water standards. Drinking water in these areas is treated before being delivered to Coachella Valley Water District customers.

## **What are the options for treating drinking water to remove arsenic?**

CVWD currently operates three water quality treatment facilities in the eastern valley to remove naturally occurring arsenic from drinking water before it is delivered to customers' homes and businesses. These facilities utilize an ion exchange technology.

## **What is the drinking water standard for arsenic?**

State and federal standards require average arsenic levels in drinking water to not exceed 10 parts per billion (ppb), which is equivalent to one drop of water in 1,000 gallons.

## **Why is arsenic a concern?**

According to the U.S. EPA, some people who drink water containing arsenic well in excess of the drinking water standard for many years could experience skin damage or problems with their circulatory system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

## **What about private wells in the eastern Coachella Valley?**

If you live in the eastern Coachella Valley and your drinking water comes from a private well or water system (not a CVWD customer), the level of arsenic in your drinking water may exceed the state and federal water quality standards. If you own a private well, you can call CVWD at (760) 398-2651 to schedule a free water quality test for arsenic. If you are a customer of a private water system, you may request the most recent water quality report from your water provider. If arsenic levels in your private well water exceed 10 ppb, then there are reasonably priced water treatment systems that can be installed at the point of use (e.g., kitchen sink) to lower arsenic to allowable levels.

## **Where can I get more information?**

<http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/rulesregs/sdwa/arsenic/>

More information on point-of-use treatment is found at:

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/safewater/arsenic/arsenictradeshows/arsenic.cfm?action=Point-of-Use>

