

PH2C: Develop fact sheets on health implications of priority drinking water contaminants

REGULATORY FUNCTION: PUBLIC HEALTH		PH2C
OBJECTIVE PH2 Regulatory compliance with water and sanitation safety plans is monitored through collected information on water quality	ACTION CARD PH2C <h1>DEVELOP FACT SHEETS ON HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF PRIORITY DRINKING WATER CONTAMINANTS</h1>	
COST: Low FREQUENCY: One time TARGET GROUPS: Consumers, consumer associations, civil society, service operators, regulators		
DESCRIPTION Regulators and ministries of health jointly develop and update fact sheets on priority contaminants for drinking water of public health concern, and make them accessible to the public through media, websites, or other means of communication. Fact sheets serve as essential means to communication that are often made available in public places, with the objective of making operators even more accountable. Regulators promote public distribution of fact sheets within their regulatory network, while ministries of health remain in charge of their development and production.		
EXPECTED OUTCOMES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health information on the risks of contaminants for drinking water safety is widely available and accessible. • Consumers and other stakeholders are more aware, and can also request information from service providers. 		
EXAMPLE 1: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA In the USA , the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has drinking water regulations for more than 90 contaminants. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) includes a process that EPA must follow to identify and list unregulated contaminants. This process may lead to the development of a national primary drinking water regulation (NPDWR) in the future. EPA must periodically publish this list of contaminants (the Contaminant Candidate List, CCL), and decide whether to regulate at least five or more contaminants on the list (regulatory determination). A regulatory determination is a formal decision on whether EPA should initiate a rulemaking process to develop a NPDWR for a specific contaminant. EPA considers three criteria when making a determination to regulate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contaminant may have an adverse effect on the health of people. • The contaminant is known to occur or there is a high chance that the contaminant will occur in public water systems often enough, and at levels of public health concern. • In the sole judgment of the Administrator, regulation of the contaminant presents a meaningful opportunity for health risk reductions for persons served by public water systems. 		
EXAMPLE 2: UNITED KINGDOM In the UK , the work of the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) is wide-ranging, covering all aspects of the quality of public water supplies. Closely aligned with its statutory duties, the DWI has responsibility for many other functions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with queries relating to drinking water quality from consumers, organizations, and businesses. • Provision of advice to ministers and officials on drinking water supply issues, and on parliamentary questions and other queries arising. • Provision of advice to ministers on private water supplies (those not supplied by a water company), and related issues. • Provision of advice and support to local authorities on all aspects of drinking water quality, including private water supplies. • Management of Defra's Water Quality and Health research programme. 		

Related to these non-statutory duties, the DWI provides information and advice to consumers on the quality of drinking water, including priority contaminants of public health concern, including the following: [Chlorine](#) / [Cryptosporidium and cryptosporidiosis](#) / [Fluoride](#) / [Lead](#) / [Nitrate](#) / [Pesticides/Pharmaceuticals](#) / [Taste and odour](#)

EXAMPLE 3: COLOMBIA

In Colombia, the Ministry of Health elaborated the ABECÉ document on water and basic sanitation, which outlines the risks of consuming contaminated water; likewise, the document 'Towards a Healthy Household, a Living Home,' the Ministries of Social Protection, National Education, the Environment, Housing and Territorial development and the Ministry of Agriculture included a chapter called 'Sips of Life. Water for Consumption at Home,' which explains the risks of using contaminated water.

Fuentes de agua

Para el abastecimiento de agua en las viviendas, se pueden utilizar tres tipos de fuentes naturales: aguas superficiales (nacimientos, ojos de agua, manantiales, quebradas, ríos, lagos y embalses), aguas subterráneas (aljibes, pozos) y aguas de lluvia.

Para el buen uso de estas fuentes, es necesario protegerlas, manteniéndolas limpias y evitando que se contaminen con basuras, plaguicidas u otras sustancias químicas, cadáveres o excrementos de animales y residuos varios de procedencia humana.

Adicionalmente a las anteriores fuentes, se pueden utilizar como suministro de agua, aguas de mar o saladas previo tratamiento, aguas de condensación, de deshielo, suministradas por carro tanque o embotelladas a nivel comercial.

Para una mayor seguridad acerca de las características de una fuente de agua para consumo humano se recomienda consultar con las autoridades locales de salud.

Manejo del agua en la vivienda

El agua contaminada nos enferma, por ello es importante filtrarla, hervirla o clorarla para que sea apta para el consumo

El consumo de agua contaminada produce, entre otras, las siguientes enfermedades:

- Enfermedad diarreica aguda.
- Parasitismo.

La enfermedad diarreica aguda (EDA), son aquellas enfermedades digestivas que se caracterizan por múltiples deposiciones acuosas, con presencia de vómito, fiebre y deshidratación. Hay una gran variedad de enfermedades de este tipo, algunas más graves que otras, como el cólera que en caso de no recibir atención oportuna y adecuada puede causar la muerte.

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LINKS

US: USA EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/how-epa-regulates-drinking-water-contaminants#decide>

UK: UK Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) webpage: <http://www.dwi.gov.uk/consumers/advice-leaflets/index.htm>

Colombia:

<https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/PP/SA/manual-educativo-nacional-vivienda-saludable.pdf>

INTERNAL CAPACITIES NEEDED AND THE ROLE OF PARTNERS

The capacity required to develop fact sheets on drinking water contaminants of concern relating to public health, includes the ability to interpret scientific studies, either national or international, including those developed by the WHO in its guidelines for drinking water quality series, and tailor them to local contexts and audiences. Development partners can assist regulators and ministries of health in this process through awareness raising on specific contaminants of concern, and peer reviewing fact sheets.