

September 23, 2016

What is chromium?

Chromium is a naturally occurring element in the Earth's crust and can be found in chemical forms in plants, soil and volcanic dust, water, humans and animals. Chromium can be present in the air, food, and water—rivers, lakes streams and wells. It is very common.

Chromium has two chemical forms

- Chromium-3 (trivalent) a required nutrient added to vitamins
- Chromium-6 (hexavalent) has associated toxicity at certain levels and has been linked to cancer
- *Total chromium* measures both chromium-3 and chromium-6

What safeguards are there to protect the public from the toxic form of chromium in drinking water?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set a public health limit on how much chromium can be present in drinking water to help people avoid ingesting unhealthy levels of chromium.

The federal drinking water standard for total chromium (combination of chromium-3 and chromium-6) is 100 parts per billion (ppb). Public drinking water systems must test for chromium and report any violations in their annual water quality reports, also known as consumer confidence report.

What are Aqua's most recent test results for total chromium and chromium-6?

Aqua's water complies with EPA regulations that require any chromium to be below 100 ppb. Our test results are published in our annual water quality reports and can be found on our [website](#).

Why is chromium in the news recently?

The Environmental Working Group, an organization that supports increased drinking water regulations, recently issued a report that misrepresented a California public health *goal* (PHG) for chromium-6 of 0.02 ppb as a limit – *which it is not. A PHG is not a drinking water standard* and is not enforceable. The actual California limit for chromium-6 is 10 ppb. The California limit for total chromium is 50 ppb. The EWG report has caused confusion among some consumers.

Even the [California Water Board](#), which enforces California's standard says, "a PHG is not a boundary line between a 'safe' and 'dangerous' level of a chemical, and drinking water is frequently demonstrated as safe to drink even if it contains chemicals at levels exceeding their PHGs."

Chromium-6 gained lots of national attention following the movie Erin Brochovich, which recounted a 1993 New Jersey lawsuit involving chromium-6 contamination.