Helena Water System
Public Water Supply MT0000241
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)
1st Quarter 2023, Distribution Date: April 1, 2023

NOTICE OF STANDARD MCL VIOLATION

The City of Helena has been notified that recent testing of our drinking water revealed a violation of the drinking water standard for HAA5. Although this is not an emergency, it is important that you are aware.

What happened?

The City has four locations where water quality is monitored, the exceedance occurred at the Green Meadow sample location. For the 1st quarter of 2023 (January 1 to March 31, 2023), the average HAA5 level for the Green Meadow sample site was 62 µg/L. The MCL allowed for HAA5 is 60 µg/L.

The MCL for HAA5 is based on an average of the sample results for the last four quarters. Although the February 2023 sample result for the site showed an HAA5 level of 41 µg/L, the system is in violation due in part to elevated HAA5 levels experienced in previous quarters that continue to affect the average.

HAA5 forms when disinfectants, used to treat the water supply, react with natural organic material. The elevated sample levels were likely caused by natural organic material that entered the distribution system during a significant water main break that occurred on May 14, 2022.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. Some people who drink water containing HAA5 in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer. This is the third quarter the City of Helena has violated the MCL for HAA5.

Steps we are taking

The City's Public Works Department performed hydrant flushing to remove natural organic matter that may have been contributing to the issue from the distribution system. The City expects to return to compliance with the MCL during upcoming monitoring periods.

What should I do?

For elevated levels of HAA5, boiling your water will not improve your water quality. The City is also not recommending you use an alternate water source. If you have specific personal health questions or concerns related to elevated HAA5, please contact your health care provider.

The City has created a webpage with more information that includes an area where you can get answers to questions you may have. It can be accessed at https://beheardhelena.com/.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

The Helena Water System is owned by the City of Helena and operated by the Public Works Department, 316 North Park Avenue, Helena, Montana, 59623, (406) 447-8096