

TASTE AND ODOR IN THE BLOOMINGTON WATER SUPPLY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is my water safe to drink?

Yes. All laboratory tests have shown the water meet all water quality guidelines for health standards. Although the water has an off taste, it is safe to drink. It is suggested that the water be chilled before drinking.

What is making my water taste bad?

Algal compounds called Geosmin (pronounced gee oz min) and methyl iso-borneol (referred to as MIB) found in naturally occurring blue green algae have been identified as the cause for the taste and odor.

Is there anything I can do to make the water taste better?

Yes. The water tastes better if it sits for some time and is chilled. Therefore, setting a pitcher in the refrigerator will help to some degree. Adding a slice of lemon to the water sometimes helps as well.

Will a home charcoal filter help?

Perhaps to some degree but it will probably not remove the taste or odor entirely. The charcoal in a home filter uses the same material (granular activated carbon) as the water treatment plant does. The water treatment plant carbon removes most, but not all, of the taste and odor causing compounds.

Why hasn't this happened before?

It has. But the water treatment plant has the capability to remove most taste and odor causing compounds from the water.

Will you take some money off my water bill because I had to buy bottled water?

No, because each home has different water consumption patterns and it is impossible to say how much water is or is not consumed. Only a very small portion of the water bill is for water that is consumed. The rest is for bathing, toilet flushing, cooking and the like. Also a portion of the water bill is for fire protection.

Why can't you just switch to another supply of water?

Because Bloomington only has water available from Lake Bloomington or Evergreen Lake and both of those lakes have the taste and odor compounds in them.

When will the water taste better?

The carbon filters at the water treatment plant continue to remove most of the compounds. However, it is still unknown how long this event will last. The important thing to remember is the water is safe to drink.

What has the Public Works Department done to correct this problem?

The flow through the water plant has been slowed to allow the carbon filters to do a better job of removing the taste and odor compounds.