



### ***Where does Bellevue's drinking water come from?***

Bellevue's high-quality drinking water comes from the Cedar River and Tolt River watersheds in the Cascade Mountains. Bellevue is a member of Cascade Water Alliance, an organization that provides water to Bellevue and seven other cities and water districts in the Puget Sound region. Cascade and its members are working together to ensure a clean, safe, and reliable water supply for people, the environment, and a growing economy.



### ***Is Bellevue's water hard or soft?***

Bellevue's water is very soft. Soap will lather easily, which means you may not need to use as much.

### ***Is my water safe to drink?***

Your water is monitored and tested every day, and results confirm your water is safe! After testing throughout 2009 for close to 200 compounds, only a few were found, and all were below the maximum level allowed by the EPA. For more details, see the 2010 Water Quality Report (put in link).

### ***Should I filter my water?***

Your tap water already meets very strict government regulations for safety. But, if you wish to buy a water filter for personal reasons or because someone in your home has a severely compromised immune system, follow the tips below:

- Make sure the filter is certified by National Sanitation Foundation International, a non-profit, non-government agency that tests water filters. (Water filters are not tested or regulated by the federal government or the EPA.) NSF's website at <http://www.nsf.org/consumer/> provides assistance in selecting a water filter or other home treatment systems. Or call their toll free hotline at 1-800-673-8010.
- Clean and maintain your filter according to manufacturer's directions to avoid the growth of microbes that could cause disease. If you're using a pitcher filter, keep the water in the refrigerator. Without proper maintenance, water from a filter may be less safe than water straight from the tap.

### ***What is a Cross-Connection and how could it harm my drinking water?***

A cross-connection occurs when your home's drinking water pipes are connected to a source of contamination. Examples are a sprayer that connects to the end of your garden hose to spray weed killer, an irrigation or fire sprinkler system, photo developing equipment, dialysis machines, or any non-potable fluid (not suitable for drinking). If the water pressure drops in the distribution system, water can "backflow" into both your home's piping and into the City's distribution system, creating a serious health hazard. To prevent dangerous backflow from cross connections and protect public health, the State of Washington requires an approved backflow assembly be installed and tested annually for irrigation and fire sprinkler systems, photo development equipment, and dialysis machines. Bellevue Utilities maintains a database to track these assemblies, monitors their testing, and sends a reminder notice, an assembly report, and a list of qualified testers when testing is due. Bellevue Utilities' goal is to protect every cross connection in the City, and your cooperation is appreciated.

If you think you may have a potential cross connection, are unsure if your drinking water is properly protected, or would like more information about the City's Cross Connection program, call the Water Quality Division at 425-452-6192.

### ***What is the difference between bottled water and tap water?***

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington State Dept. of Health prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in tap water. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates established limits for contaminants in bottled water. Tap water costs about 1 cent a gallon compared to bottled water, which can be \$10 or more a gallon. In some cases, water in bottles is the same

water as a city's tap. It takes many resources to make plastic bottles for water and energy to transport them. You can save money and resources by putting tap water in a reusable bottle.



### ***What is a safe container to carry water in?***

You've probably heard in the news that bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical found in some plastics, has been linked to a host of health problems, including cardiovascular disease, liver failure, and type 2 diabetes (*Journal of the American Medical Association* 9/17/08.) To avoid BPA, buy a plastic bottle that says "BPA free," a stainless steel container, or clean a glass bottle and reuse it. If you are drinking out of the same container you carry water in, be sure to wash it often with soap and hot water to avoid bacteria.

### ***Is it safe to drink water from a garden hose?***

Substances used in vinyl garden hoses to keep them flexible can get into the water as it passes through the hose. These chemicals are not good for you or your pets. Before drinking or filling pet drinking containers, allow the water to run for a short time to flush the hose. Check local hardware stores for hoses made with "food-grade" plastic, which will not contaminate the water.

### ***Should I be concerned about lead in my water?***

Water delivered to your home does not contain lead. However, it is possible that lead levels at your home may be higher than at other homes in the community as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing. Homes most vulnerable to lead and copper corrosion were built between 1982 and 1987 with copper pipes. (Lead solder has not been allowed since June 1986.) Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. If you are concerned about the potential for elevated lead levels in your home's water, please call Utilities Water Quality Division at 425-452-6192.

### ***Does Bellevue's water contain fluoride?***

Yes. Fluoride has been added to Seattle's Cedar and Tolt supplies since 1970 as a result of a public vote in 1968. In January 2011, the concentration of fluoride was reduced from 1 part per million to 0.8 part per million, the lowest concentration in the acceptable range defined by the WA State Department of Health. Based on surveys conducted by the Seattle-King County Health Department and the University of Washington School of Dentistry, there has been a 49 percent reduction in dental decay as a result of adding fluoride to drinking water. See information from the American Dental Association at [http://www.ada.org/sections/newsAndEvents/pdfs/fluoridation\\_facts.pdf](http://www.ada.org/sections/newsAndEvents/pdfs/fluoridation_facts.pdf)