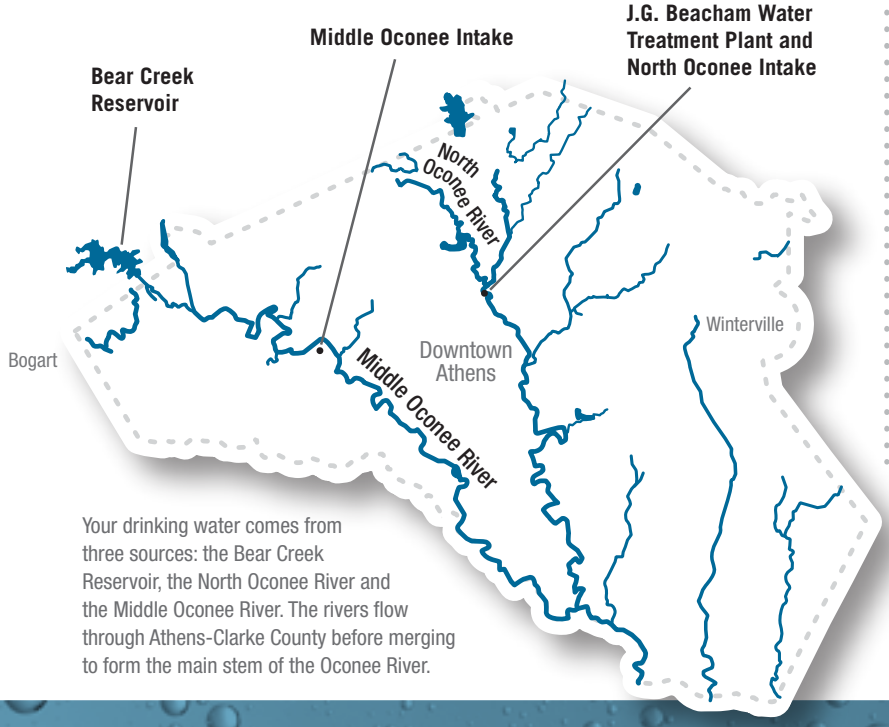
SPECIAL EDITION with vital information on the quality of your drinking water, as required by the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act.

Summer 2017

waterSOURCE

ABOUT YOUR drinking water

Before arriving at your faucet, your drinking water travels through a complex treatment and delivery system. The Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department (PUD) tests water at the source, throughout the treatment process and before it travels through pipelines and storage to you. Ongoing tests and adjustments help to ensure that your water is always safe to drink and pleasing in taste, odor, and color.



Your drinking water comes from three sources: the Bear Creek Reservoir, the North Oconee River and the Middle Oconee River. The rivers flow through Athens-Clarke County before merging to form the main stem of the Oconee River.

LEAD AND DRINKING WATER

There's been a lot in the news about lead in drinking water. Here in Athens-Clarke County, we work to ensure that lead levels are very low – our sample testing consistently shows that the amount of lead in our treated drinking water is well below the EPA's allowed levels.

Lead in drinking water is almost always associated with the corrosion of lead-containing plumbing fixtures and solder used in private plumbing in households and buildings. We make drinking water less corrosive on its way to your water taps by carefully maintaining a proper pH (acidity) level and adding ortho-phosphates, which create a protective layer inside the pipes. We also monitor corrosivity of tap water at three different locations in the distribution system.

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. The Public Utilities Department is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in private plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested.

Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at **epa.gov/safewater/lead**.

Your water, treated and delivered by the Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department, meets or surpasses all state and federal standards for safe drinking water. SEE TEST RESULTS INSIDE.

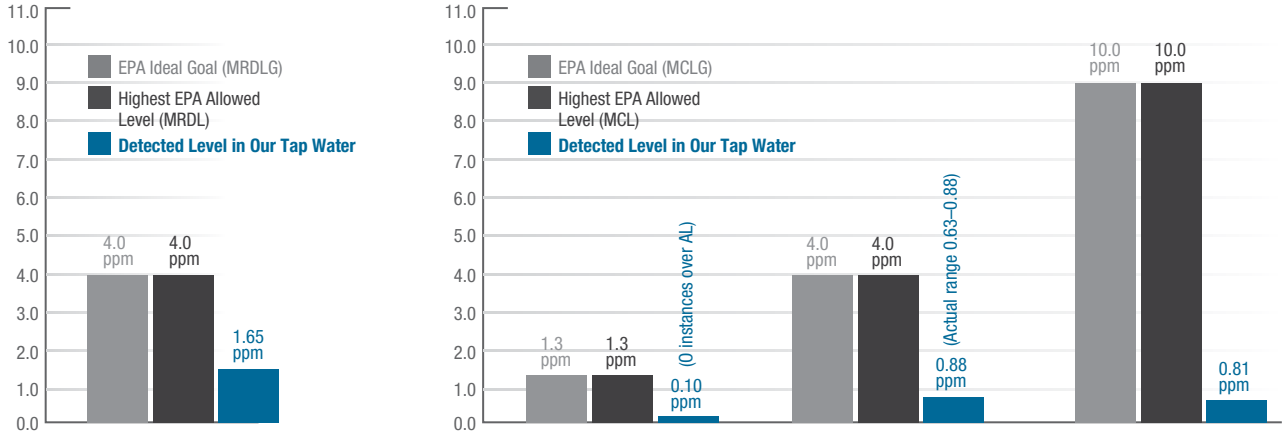
¿HABLA ESPANOL?

Este Informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua beber. Tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

2016 WATER TEST RESULTS

contaminants measured in parts per million (ppm)

The equivalent of one drop of water in 42 gallons.



CHLORINE

Typical source:
Water additive for disinfection

COPPER

Typical source:
Corrosion of private household plumbing systems

FLUORIDE

Typical source:
Water additive that promotes strong teeth

NITRATE (NITROGEN)

Typical source:
Runoff from fertilizer use

TERMS TO KNOW

AL (Action Level) The concentration of a contaminant, which if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

MCLG (Maximum Contaminant Level Goal) The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

MCL (Maximum Contaminant Level) The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL) The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG) The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contamination.

TT (Treatment Technique) A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

Turbidity A measure of the cloudiness of water. We monitor turbidity because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system and the removal of some pathogens which can be trapped in turbidity.

NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Unit) is a measurement of the clarity of the water.

Why are there contaminants in my water?

As we learned in school, pure water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen. However, drinking water sources include streams, lakes, rivers, reservoirs and wells, which are never purely hydrogen and oxygen. They are subject to potential “contamination” by a wide variety of substances that occur naturally or are man-made. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves natural minerals, and can pick up substances resulting from human activity or the presence of animals.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems.

CONTAMINANTS THAT MAY BE IN SOURCE WATER BEFORE TREATMENT:

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria that may come from septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, wildlife and sewage treatment plants.

Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban storm runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining or farming.

Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources, such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.

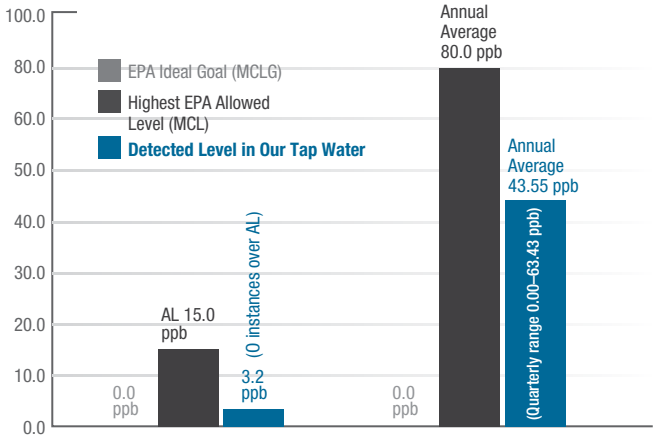
Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.

Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

THE CHARTS BELOW SHOW THE FINDINGS OF PUD WATER TESTING AFTER TREATMENT AND HOW IT COMPARES TO NATIONAL STANDARDS. **ALL RESULTS MEET OR EXCEED EPA STANDARDS.**

contaminants measured in parts per billion (ppb)

The equivalent of one drop of water in 14,000 gallons.



LEAD

Typical source:
Corrosion of private household plumbing systems

TOTAL TRIHALOMETHANES

Typical source:
By-product of drinking water chlorination

additional measurements of contaminants

	TURBIDITY	TOTAL ORGANIC CARBON
EPA Ideal Goal (MCLG)	0.0	N/A
Highest EPA Allowed Level (MCL)	TT=1 NTU TT= 95% of samples ≤0.3 NTU	TT
Detected Level	0.24 (Highest single measurement) 100% ≤0.3 NTU	
Range of Removal		29.4–55.2% (Annual average removal 38.12%)
Typical source:	Soil runoff	Naturally present in the environment

Other important tests

Athens-Clarke County also tests for total coliform bacteria, fecal coliform, and E. coli, which occur naturally from human and animal waste in lakes, rivers, and streams. ACC has not detected any total coliform bacteria, fecal coliform, or E. coli in your treated water.

Protecting our water sources

In order to protect public drinking water supplies at the source – our rivers, lakes and streams – the State of Georgia established a Source Water Assessment Program. As part of this program, Athens-Clarke County and the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission completed a Source Water Assessment of the Middle Oconee and North Oconee rivers. Both rivers have been ranked with a medium level of pollution susceptibility.

Based on the results of the Source Water Assessment, the county developed a Watershed Protection Plan for safeguarding our water resources. Copies of the ACC Source Water Assessment Report and Watershed Protection Plan are available at the Public Utilities Department Administration Office, 124 East Hancock Avenue in downtown Athens.

Important health information from the EPA

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general public. Immuno-compromised individuals, such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly people, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available by contacting the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

All PUD records are available to the public. The Mayor and Commission review and approve all major water and wastewater projects at regularly scheduled meetings. These commission meetings, held at City Hall, are open to the public and televised locally on ACTV Cable Channel 180. Commission meeting information is available at athensclarkecounty.com.

For questions about this report or assistance with regulatory or environmental issues, call 706-613-3729 or email savewater@athensclarkecounty.com.

waterSOURCE

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 135
Athens, GA

Public Utilities
water. wastewater. conservation.

www.athensclarkecounty.com/publicutilities
www.thinkatthesink.com

124 East Hancock Ave.
Athens, Georgia 30601

Administration
706-613-3470

Water Bill Questions
706-613-3500

Water Conservation
706-613-3729

To Report a Water Leak
706-613-3495

Emergencies
706-613-3481

Printed locally on recycled paper.

WATER-WISE GARDENING WORKSHOP

Learn water-wise gardening techniques from an Athens Master Gardener, presented by the Athens-Clarke County Extension Office. As a co-sponsor, the Water Conservation Office will present a drought update.

when: July 12, 2017 • 6:00 pm–7:30 pm

where: Athens Clarke County Library Auditorium
2025 Baxter Street

register: email atedrow@uga.edu

TOURS

Get a behind-the-scenes look and learn more about your water at one of the quarterly tours of our state-of-the art water treatment and water reclamation facilities.

next tour: August 16
Noon–1:00 pm

where: Middle Oconee Water Reclamation Facility

register: thinkatthesink.com

Visit athensclarkecounty.com/publicutilities or contact the Water Conservation Office, at 706-613-3729 for more information.

Wicked wipes are clogging pipes!!!!

Wet wipes may seem harmless – soft and used for cleanliness – but wipes are wicked in our sewer system. Even though the package may say that they are flushable, they are not! These wicked wet wipes do not break down like toilet paper. By clogging pipelines, they can cause raw sewage to overflow in your home, ooze from a manhole cover, or hinder equipment at our water reclamation facility.

If you use ANY KIND of wet wipes – for babies, personal cleaning, or make-up removal – **PUT THEM IN THE TRASH**, not the toilet.