

High nitrate warning for Hiawatha water customers

(KNZA)--A warning has been issued for water customers of the city of Hiawatha as the city again exceeds the allowable level of nitrates in its drinking water.

According to a notification released by the city, concentrations of 11 milligrams per liter were found in a sample collected September 20th, exceeding the state and federal maximum contaminant level.

Customers are told that while the water is safe to consume for most, it should not be given to infants, as children below the age of 6 months could become seriously ill.

Pregnant women, or those with specific health needs, should consult a doctor prior to ingestion. The water should also not be boiled.

The high nitrate warning also affects customers of Brown County Rural Water District No. 2, the City of Powhattan, the City of Robinson, and Doniphan County Rural Water District No. 1. which receive their water from Hiawatha

The city of Hiawatha is constructing a new water treatment plant to address the ongoing nitrate problem. Construction began last month, with completion expected within the next 12 months.

Brown County Rural Water District No. 2 has partnered with several other water suppliers in the region to create Public Wholesale Water Supply No. 27 for the purpose of distributing high quality water that is low in nitrates to its member entities at the lowest cost possible. The new water supply district is in its final stages of completion and will be in operation very soon.

Editors note: the following was released by the city

Drinking Water Warning

City of Hiawatha water system has high levels of nitrate

THE CITY OF HIAWATHA has exceeded the state and federal maximum contaminant level (MCL) allowed for nitrate (as N) in drinking water. Concentrations of 11.0 milligrams per liter (mg/l) were found in a sample collected on September 20, 2017. Nitrate above 10 mg/l is considered to be an acute MCL violation.

What to do?

- **DO NOT GIVE THE WATER TO INFANTS.** Infants below the age of six months who drink the water containing nitrate in excess of the MCL could become seriously ill and, if untreated, may die. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blue baby syndrome.

Blue baby syndrome is indicated by blueness of the skin. Symptoms in infants can develop rapidly, with health deteriorating over period of days. If symptoms occur, seek medical attention immediately.

- Water, juice, and formula for children under six months of age should not be prepared with tap water. Bottled water or other water low in nitrates should be used for infants until further notice.
- **DO NOT BOIL THE WATER.** Boiling, freezing, filtering, or letting water stand does not reduce the nitrate level. Excessive boiling can make the nitrates more concentrated, because nitrates remain behind when the water evaporates.
- Adults and children older than six months can drink the tap water (nitrate is a concern for infants because they can't process nitrates in the same way adults can) However, if you are pregnant or have specific health concerns, you may wish to consult your doctor.

Source of Nitrate

Nitrate in drinking water can come from natural, industrial, or agricultural sources (including septic systems and run-off). Levels of nitrate can vary in drinking water throughout the year. The City of Hiawatha will let consumers know when the amount of nitrate is again below the limit.

Corrective Action

The City of Hiawatha is working with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and USDA Rural Development to bring the nitrate levels to an acceptable level. We have secured funding for a water treatment plant and have hired an engineering firm to design and oversee the construction. Construction on new plant has begun and completion within the next 12 months.

For additional information, please contact Rick Koenig at (785) 742-7850 or stop at City Hall at 701 Oregon Street, or call (785) 742-7417.

Editors note: the following was released by Brown County Rural Water District #2

DRINKING WATER WARNING

Brown County Rural Water District No. 2 water system has high levels of nitrate

The City of Hiawatha collected a water sample on September 20, 2017, from which Rural Water District No. 2 purchases water, and it showed nitrate levels of 11.0 mg/L. This is above the federal and state nitrate standard or maximum contaminant level (CL) of 10 mg/L. Nitrate in drinking water is a serious health concern for infants less than six months old.

What to do?

- **DO NOT GIVE THE WATER TO INFANTS.** Infants below the age of six months who drink water containing nitrate in excess of the MCL could become seriously ill and, if untreated, may die. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blue baby syndrome. Blue baby syndrome is indicated by blueness of the skin. Symptoms in infants can develop rapidly, with health deteriorating over a period of days. If symptoms occur, seek medical attention immediately.
- Water, juice and formula for children under six months of age should not be prepared with tap water. Bottled water or other water low in nitrates should be used for infants until further

notice.

- **DO NOT BOIL THE WATER.** Boiling, freezing, filtering or letting water stand does not reduce the nitrate level. Excessive boiling can make the nitrates more concentrated, because nitrates remain behind when the water evaporates.
- Adults and children older than six months can drink the tap water (nitrate is a concern for infants because they can't process nitrates in the same way adults can). However, if you are pregnant or have specific health concerns, you may wish to consult your doctor.

Source of Nitrate: Nitrate in drinking water can come from natural, industrial or agricultural sources (including septic systems and run-off). Levels of nitrate in drinking water can vary throughout the year. Brown County Rural Water District No. 2 will let you know when the amount of nitrate is again below the limit.

Corrective Action: Brown County Rural Water District No. 2 has partnered with several other water suppliers in our region to create Public Wholesale Water Supply No. 27 for the purpose of distributing high quality water that is low in nitrates to its member entities at the lowest cost possible. The Public Wholesale Water Supply No. 27 is in its final stages of completion and will be in operation very soon.

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