

Tracks FAQs

What Chemicals Are In My Drinking Water?

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC—safer, healthier people.

[Desiree Robinson] Hello everyone. Thank you for tuning in to the Tracks FAQs Podcast, where we explore topics about CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network. In this podcast series, CDC scientists address frequently asked questions about the National Tracking Network, including using and applying data, running queries, and much more. Epidemiologist Heather Strosnider joins us to answer one of our top questions. Thanks for joining us.

[Heather Strosnider] Thank you.

[Desiree Robinson] Heather, one of our Tracking Network users wants to know...*How do I find what kinds of chemicals were in my state's drinking water for the last couple of years?*

[Heather Strosnider] To determine levels of chemicals in drinking water, you first have to know where your water comes from. Data for both community water and well water are available on the Tracking Network. The two water sources have information on different contaminants that are tested in each water system. There are two differences in the testing process between community water and well water - the frequency of testing and where and how samples are taken. Community water systems have more rigorous testing regulations than private well water. As an example, community water systems are required to be tested more frequently than well water sources. Also, while each community water system is sampled and reported individually, each well is not. For well water, the U.S. Geological Survey provides information on the quality of aquifers and ground water sources for wells in a particular area.

To check on the quality of water in your area using the Tracking Network, go to the "environments" page and select "community water" or "well water." The next page will provide different indicators available on the Tracking Network, such as the presence of arsenic or disinfectant byproducts in the water. Select the indicator you would like additional information on. Then select a measure for that indicator. Each indicator has its own list of available measures. Choose your state and the time period you're interested in viewing. You can view the data results on a map, in a table, or in a graph.

[Desiree Robinson] I would like to thank CDC Epidemiologist Heather Strosnider for joining us for this episode of Tracks FAQs. Thank you, Heather. That's all for this episode of Tracks FAQs. To submit a question for a CDC Tracking expert to address in this series, please e-mail trackingsupport@cdc.gov.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO 24/7.