March 14, 2020

Water Transmission and COVID-19

Coronavirus and Drinking Water and Wastewater

There is no higher priority for Fairfield County Utilities than protecting the health and safety of their customers. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has assisted in providing this important information about COVID-19 as it relates to drinking water and wastewater to provide clarity to the public. The COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking-water supplies. Based on current evidence, COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking water. Conventional water treatment methods that use filtration and disinfection, such as those methods used at Fairfield County Utilities drinking water systems, should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19. Fairfield County Utilities customers can continue to use and drink water from their tap as usual.

The Ohio EPA has established regulations with treatment requirements for public water systems that prevent waterborne pathogens such as viruses from contaminating drinking water and wastewater. Coronavirus, which causes COVID-19, is a type of virus that is particularly susceptible to disinfection. Standard treatment and disinfectant processes are expected to be effective.

Is drinking tap water safe?

Ohio EPA and Fairfield County Utilities recommends that customers continue to use and drink tap water as usual. The World Health Organization (WHO) material stated that the, “presence of the COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking-water supplies and based on current evidence the risk to water supplies is low.”1 Additionally, according to the CDC, COVID-19 is mainly thought to spread between people who are in close contact with one another. Read more from the CDC about transmission of COVID-19. Further, EPA’s drinking water regulations require treatment at public water systems to remove or kill pathogens, including viruses.

Do I need to boil my drinking water?

Boiling your water is not required as a precaution against COVID-19.

Is tap water safe to use for hand washing?

The county water is safe to use for washing hands. Ohio EPA recommends that customers continue to use and drink tap water as usual. According to the CDC, washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds helps prevent the spread of COVID-19. Read CDC’s handwashing guidance.

What should I do If I’m concerned about my drinking water?

World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that the, “presence of the COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking-water supplies and based on current evidence the risk to water supplies is low.”

Customers that receive their water from Fairfield County Utilities may contact the utilities office to learn more about treatments being used. Treatments include filtration and chlorine that remove or kill pathogens before they reach the tap.

Do I need to buy bottled water or store drinking water?

No. Customers can continue to use and drink tap water as usual. At this time, there are no indications that COVID-19 is in the drinking water supply or will affect the reliable supply of water.

What is Ohio EPA’s role in ensuring drinking water remains safe?

EPA has established regulations with treatment requirements for Fairfield County Utilities that prevent waterborne pathogens such as viruses from contaminating drinking water. These treatment requirements include filtration and disinfectants (chlorine) that remove or kill pathogens before they reach the tap. Additionally, WHO notes that, “conventional, centralized water treatment methods which utilize filtration and disinfection should inactivate COVID-19 virus.”

Ohio EPA continues to coordinate with our federal partners, including the CDC, and will continue to provide technical assistance and support to states, as appropriate.
Can I get COVID-19 from wastewater or sewage?

World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that “there is no evidence to date that COVID-19 virus has been transmitted via sewerage systems, with or without wastewater treatment.”

Do wastewater treatment plants treat COVID-19?

Yes, wastewater treatment plants treat viruses and other pathogens. COVID-19 is a type of virus that is particularly susceptible to disinfection. Fairfield County’s standard treatment and disinfectant processes at wastewater treatment plants are expected to be effective.

For additional information:

CDC: Guidance for reducing health risks to workers handling human waste or sewage

CDC: Healthcare professionals: Frequently asked questions and answers

CDC: Healthy Water

Occupational Safety and Health Administration: COVID-19 Control and Prevention: Solid waste and wastewater management workers and employers external icon

World Health Organization: Water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management for COVID-19 external