

October 10, 2013

Precautionary Measures for Families

During this time of uncertainty caused by the tragic event in St. Bernard Parish and the disturbing news from DeSoto Parish, H2O Systems, Inc., would like to assure our customers that YOUR WATER IS SAFE TO DRINK.

The rare ameba discovered in the drinking water in St. Bernard Parish and DeSoto Parish is generally found in soil and surface water habitats (ponds, rivers, lakes, etc.). The ameba becomes dangerous to our health when it is forced high into the nasal passages, most commonly during diving or swimming in fresh water or inadequately maintained spas, tubs or swimming pools.

The ameba, if present in drinking water, can be killed with chlorine. Therefore, as a precaution, we at H2O Systems, Inc., began in September to gradually increase the chlorine feed in all of our water systems when the ameba was found in the St. Bernard water system. *As the chlorine residuals are increased to meet the 0.5 mg/l now recommended by DHH, you may notice a stronger chlorine smell to your water and the increased chlorine may cause some discoloration of the natural minerals that are present in your source water.*

At this time, neither the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the LA Department of Health & Hospitals (DHH) has required testing of our water supplies for the presence of the ameba. They did issue the following "precautions" to citizens. Some of these suggestions do pertain to areas that may be of concern to our customers, such as those pertaining to above-ground pools and spas...

To prevent any risk when using drinking water, make sure water does not go up your nose. Some common sense suggestions from the CDC include:

- * DO NOT allow water to go up your nose or sniff water into your nose when bathing, showering, washing your face, or swimming in small hard plastic/blow-up pools.
- * DO NOT jump into or put your head under bathing water (bathtubs, small hard plastic/blow-up pools) - walk or lower yourself in.
- * DO NOT allow children to play unsupervised with hoses or sprinklers, as they may accidentally squirt water up their nose. Avoid slip-n-slides or other activities where it is difficult to prevent water going up the nose.
- * DO run bath and shower taps and hoses for 5 minutes before use to flush out the pipes. This is most important the first time you use the tap after the water utility raises the disinfectant level.
- * DO keep small hard plastic/blow-up pools clean by emptying, scrubbing, and allowing them to dry after each use.
- * DO use only boiled and cooled, distilled, or sterile water for making sinus rinse solutions for neti pots or performing ritual ablutions.
- * DO keep your swimming pool adequately disinfected before and during use. Adequate disinfection means:
 - o Pools: free chlorine at 1-3 parts per million (ppm) and pH 7.2-7.8
 - o Hot tubs/spas: free chlorine 2-4 parts per million (ppm) or free bromine 4-6 ppm and pH 7.2-7.8
 - o If you need to top off the water in your swimming pool with tap water, DO place the hose directly into the skimmer box and ensure that the filter is running. DO NOT top off by placing the hose in the body of the pool.

AGAIN, THE ABOVE MENTIONED ACTIONS TAKEN BY H2O SYSTEMS, INC., IN RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT UNCERTAINTIES SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS ANY INDICATION THAT WE HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRESENCE OF THE RARE AMEBA IN OUR SOURCE WATER.

As you have any questions concerning this information, please contact us at (958)626-5132.