

# Why Does my Water Taste and Smell Like Chlorine?

Every spring, as recommended by North Carolina, the Town of Cary uses chlorine instead of a combination of chlorine and ammonia to disinfect public drinking water.

## Why is the Water Disinfectant Changed?

State regulators encourage utilities that normally use chloramines—a compound of chlorine and ammonia—for disinfection, to use chlorine for at least one month each year. The annual change helps ensure a high level of disinfection in water mains as chlorine is a more intense disinfectant than chloramines.

## Is the Water Safe to Drink?

Yes, the water is safe to drink. In fact, this annual process helps ensure that it stays that way.

## Is More Chlorine Added than Usual?

No, the same amount of chlorine is added throughout the year. The addition of ammonia is simply discontinued. Using chlorine alone causes the taste and smell of chlorine to be more pronounced.

## Why is My Water Discolored?

During this annual process, the Town of Cary releases water from fire hydrants to help ensure chlorine flows through the entire system. This “flushing” can cause temporary discoloration. Citizens are encouraged to check their water before washing white clothes. If the water appears discolored, they should run the cold water in all household faucets for a few minutes.



## How Can I Reduce the Chlorine Taste/Odor from My Water?

- Filter the water using an activated carbon filter, such as: pitcher filters and refrigerator filters,
- Let the water sit in an open container in the refrigerator for a day or so before using,
- Boil the water for one minute to evaporate the chlorine, or
- Add a few lemon slices to a pitcher of water. The lemon's ascorbic acid naturally dechlorinates the drinking water.

Citizens who use water for kidney dialysis machines, fish aquariums or other chlorine sensitive uses should be aware that water may contain chlorine, ammonia, or a mixture of the two throughout the months of March and April.

## Questions?

Still concerned about the your drinking water? Citizen Advocates are standing by to assist you. Simply dial 3-1-1 from within Cary town limits or (919) 469-4000 outside town limits.