

DRINKING WATER WARNING

The Town of Orwell water has high levels of nitrate -

**DO NOT GIVE THE WATER TO INFANTS UNDER 6 MONTHS OLD
OR USE IT TO MAKE INFANT FORMULA**

On January 20, 2022, we received notice that the sample collected at the Town Hall on January 3, 2022, showed nitrate levels of 12.0 mg/L. This is above the nitrate standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), of 10.0 mg/L. Nitrate in drinking water is a serious health concern for infants less than six months old.

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.

What should I do? What does this mean?

- **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.

What happened? What is being done?

Nitrate naturally occurs in a number of foods, particularly vegetables. It is also used as preservatives in meats such as bacon. Nitrate is also used to make lawn, garden and agricultural fertilizers and is found in sewage and wastes from farm animals. It generally gets into drinking water by runoff into surface water or by leaching into groundwater after application or after improper sewage or animal waste disposal.

A review of annual Nitrate results between 2020 and 2021 indicate an average result of 7.7 mg/L. The elevated level was found during 2022 routine sampling of the town's water supply. Additional nitrate samples were also collected on January 20, 2022, from the Town Hall, the town's dug well, and from the spring house. The dug well and the spring house are the primary water sources for the town.

The results of the additional samples were received on 1/25/2022 indicates that the required repeat sample from the Town Hall had a nitrate level of 12.2 mg/L, the sample collected from the dug well had a nitrate level of 10.1 mg/L, and the sample collected from the spring house had a nitrate level of 14.7. As a result of the sampling, the town has decided to discontinue using the spring house as a source for our potable water. The town will continue to monitor the nitrate levels in the dug well and within the distribution system and will notify residents of these results as they become available.

For more information, please contact the town supervisor, William Potter, at (315) 298-3236 or at supervisor@townoforwell-ny.us.

**Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail. **

This notice is being sent to you by the Town of Orwell. State Water System ID#: 3704360.
Date distributed: 1/25/2022.