NITRATE CONTAMINATION IN

U.S. DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS



America has a serious problem with nitrate contamination of drinking water and it is most severe in small communities

that can least afford to fix it.

parts per million, or ppm The legal maximum for nitrate in drinking water, under the

Safe Drinking Water Act.

BUT

parts per million, or ppm The amount of nitrate

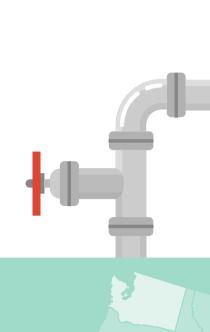
in water at which the risk of cancer increases, according to the National Cancer Institute.

1,70 communities nationwide had drinking water containing nitrate at or above 5 ppm.

In 2014-2015:

1,155 of these communities don't have a way to

> treat their water for nitrate contamination.



Americans drank water from these systems.

nitrate above 5 ppm and no nitrate treatment

68% OF THE COMMUNITIES

whose drinking water systems have

ARE LOCATED IN JUST 10 STATES.

Arizona, California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington

The smaller a community, the fewer rate-paying customers,

Customers fund community water treatment.

which means less money to clean up drinking water.

of the water systems that don't have a way to treat for nitrates serve **FEWER THAN 500 PEOPLE.** There are two common ways to treat water contaminated with nitrate. Both are costly especially for small communities with a small

REVERSE OSMOSIS:

Pressurized water is pushed

through a membrane that filters

out nitrate and other contaminants.

of the water systems that don't have a way to treat for nitrates serve FEWER THAN 3,300 PEOPLE.

a system could cost as much as **ION EXCHANGE SYSTEM:** \$666 A resin removes nitrate as water passes through it. per person each year.

Nitrate pollution is not only a problem for

community water systems. Those who rely on

are estimated to get their drinking water

from private wells.

tax base and, often, a low average income.

a system could cost as much as \$2,776

per person each year.

For very small communities,

For very small communities,

private wells for drinking water may also be affected.

44 million Americans

ONE KNOWS HOW MUCH

of the private wells tested in Iowa had nitrate levels of 5 ppm or more.*

* 2017 Iowa Private Well Tracking System

NITRATE IS IN THESE WELLS, but recent data showed that

HOW CAN WE PREVENT THIS PROBLEM? VISIT

EWG.ORG/RESEARCH/NITRATECOST