Chromium-6 Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Chromium-6 (Hexavalent Chromium)?

A: Chromium is an odorless and tasteless metallic element. Chromium is found naturally in rocks, plants, soil and volcanic dust, and animals. The most common forms of chromium that occur in natural waters are trivalent chromium (chromium-3) and hexavalent chromium (chromium-6). Chromium-3 is an essential dietary element. It is found in many vegetables, fruits, meats, grains, and yeast. Chromium-6 occurs naturally in the environment from the erosion of natural chromium deposits. Chromium-6 can also be produced by certain industrial processes.

Q: What is the regulatory limit for Chromium-6?

A: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has never set a specific limit for chromium-6. Instead, the EPA has set a federal standard for total chromium in drinking water, which is 0.1 ppm (parts per million). The current standard is based on potential dermatological effects over many years, such as allergic dermatitis (skin reactions).

Q: What are the levels of total chromium in The Woodlands water supply?

A: Water systems are required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to routinely test for total chromium. The last set of total chromium tests were conducted in March and April of 2017. The results for both sets of tests showed that levels were below the detection limit of 0.01 ppm, meaning that the amount of total chromium was basically undetectable.

Q: Can chromium-6 be filtered from my water?

A: There are a number of water treatment units that are capable of removing chromium-6 from the water supply. http://www.ewg.org/research/ewgs-water-filter-buying-guide is a website that compares various filters and their capabilities.

Q: Where can I find more information relating to the water supply for my area?

A: The TCEQ has a website that contains all sample results for Texas water systems. The website can be found by searching "TCEQ Drinking Water Watch" or by visiting: http://dww2.tceq.texas.gov/DWW/.