

Fluoridated Water and Infants

You may have heard or read recently about an American Dental Association statement regarding infants and fluoridated water. How do utilities - like Hillsborough County Water Resource Services - decide whether to pass along such information to customers?

As a public utility which provides high-quality drinking water to more than 350,000 people, Water Resource Services receives numerous advisories, statements, position papers, opinions and articles from a wide variety of sources. Our staff carefully evaluates each new development in the industry. Medical issues in particular can be extremely complex and confusing, and difficult to put into context by anyone other than medical professionals. That is why, in such matters, we rely on medical experts - in particular, the Hillsborough County Health Department - to evaluate the validity of the material and determine what message should be relayed to the public. Utilities are not allowed to make such judgment calls themselves. To do so would violate procedures, protocol and laws established to safeguard our customers.

The ADA is among dozens of major health organizations that endorse community fluoridation to prevent tooth decay. The ADA's concern, based on a study done by the National Research Council, is that infants who receive fluoride above optimal amounts may be susceptible to fluorosis, a condition that damages tooth enamel. The optimal fluoride level in drinking water is 0.7 to 1.2 parts per million. Water Resource Services supplies 0.8 parts per million of fluoride in its drinking water. Further, both the ADA and the National Research Council indicate that additional research is needed.

The health and safety of our customers is paramount. This is a responsibility we take very seriously. We trust in the judgment of the qualified experts who advise us on medical issues related to our drinking water. When they deem an advisory or public notification necessary on any health-related issue, you can be assured that we will use every means available to share this information with you.

Update on Watering Restrictions

When this issue of *The Communicator* went to the printer, the Southwest Florida Water Management District was considering extending its requirement that watering of established lawns and landscaping must remain limited to one day a week. The original sunset date for this provision was July 31.

To find out what the current watering restrictions are, you may:

- Call 275-7094 for a recorded message;
- Visit www.hillsboroughcounty.org/water and click on the "Restrictions & Conservation" button;
- Call the Water Conservation Team at 274-6800 during regular business hours.

Please remember, watering on the wrong day can net you a fine starting at \$100.

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For more information, call the Hillsborough Information Line at 272-5900, or visit the County's website at: www.hillsboroughcounty.org

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Buyers Beware On Water Treatment Systems

It sounds like a great offer - fill out a card or return a phone call, and have your tap water tested - for free. Take that step though, and what you're likely to get is a heavy-handed sales pitch to buy overpriced and unnecessary water treatment systems.

Hillsborough County Water Resource Services often receives calls from customers concerned about these sales tactics, which start with postcards and phone calls, or sample bottles left at front doors. Many complaints come from residents who are seniors, disabled or who have limited incomes - prime targets for salespeople who rely on scare tactics and high-pressure pitches.



"You can call them whatever you want," said Kevin Jackson, chief investigator for Hillsborough County's Consumer Protection Agency. "They're just salesmen. If you respond, they're going to call you, and they're going to come to your house."

Hillsborough County Water Resource Services' water meets or beats the strict standards set by the U.S.

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In This Issue...

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- Watering Restrictions Update
- Free Gardening Workshops

Top 10 Mosquito Prevention Tips

Courtesy of Hillsborough County's Mosquito and Aquatic Weed Control Section

- **Get rid of mosquito-breeding containers.** Destroy or dispose of tin cans, old tires, buckets, unused plastic swimming pools or other containers that collect and hold water. Do not allow water to accumulate in the saucers of flowerpots, cemetery flower urns, pet dishes, birdbaths, boats or livestock troughs.

- **Prevent your swimming pool from becoming a breeding ground.** If you aren't using your swimming pool, put a cover over it. Make sure the cover doesn't sag and hold pools of rainwater, which can also provide a breeding ground.

- **If you have bromeliad plants in your yard, regularly rinse them out with a garden hose.**

Mosquito larvae need water to grow and evolve, and bromeliads are an excellent host.

- **Protect your children from mosquitoes, especially at night.** Hot, sweaty children playing outdoors at night are like a

glowing beacon to mosquitoes. Protect your children from irritating bites and the possibility of mosquito-borne illnesses by ensuring they cover exposed skin, and wear an insect repellent containing DEET. Please read the label before using this product and avoid direct application to the face.

- **Keep your rain gutters cleaned out.** Rain gutters can get clogged with leaves and debris, which impede the flow of water. Not only is that bad for your roof, it creates an ideal habitat for mosquito larvae, which need water to grow into adults.

- **Take special precautions at dusk.** Dusk is a mosquito's favorite time to fly and bite. A good onshore breeze will keep the mosquitoes at bay, but if you haven't got one, a portable fan will do the trick. Remember also to wear long sleeves and insect repellent containing DEET.



- **Take special precautions in high mosquito areas.** Use head nets, long sleeves and long pants if you venture into areas with high mosquito populations, such as salt marshes. Also use insect repellent containing DEET on any exposed skin.

- **Be extra careful when a warning is in effect.** If there is a mosquito-borne disease warning in effect, stay inside in the evening when mosquitoes are active.

- **Make sure window and door screens are "bug tight."** Check your screens periodically to make sure there are no holes and replace worn-out screens.

- **Watch out for puddles in your yard.** Irrigate lawns and gardens carefully to prevent water from standing for several days.

Free Gardening Workshops for North Tampa Residents!

Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension will offer free workshops for North Tampa residents at the Hillsborough County Resource Services office located off Northdale Boulevard, one block west of Dale Mabry, at 15610 Premier Drive. Each attending household will receive a free starter micro-irrigation kit and a compost bin with thermometer (free compost bin available at October 27 workshop only).

Pre-registration is required, and seating is limited. Call 744-5519, ext. 146 or go online to http://hillsborough_fyn.ifas.ufl.edu. You will receive a confirmation letter with directions one week prior to the workshop.

- **Tuesday, September 25**
Water Wise Irrigation, 11am-12pm
- **Monday, October 15**
Water Wise Irrigation, 4pm-5pm
- **Saturday, October 27**
Water Wise Irrigation, 9am-10am
Compost Happens, 10:30am-11:30am



Water Treatment Systems (Continued from Front)

Environmental Protection Agency and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. A water softener or filtration system might change the taste or "feel" of the water, but the water is perfectly safe to drink without additional treatment. Further, it's against the law for these salespersons to tell potential customers that their water is contaminated or unhealthy, or that any illness is related to the quality of the water.

Water Resource Services routinely tests and monitors the quality of its drinking water. A water quality report is sent annually to all public utility customers. Data for Hillsborough County Water Resource Services can be viewed on-line at www.hillsboroughcounty.org/water; click on the "Water Quality" button on the left side of the page.

At no time will a County employee ask to enter your home to test the water unless a specific problem has been reported. Employees wear official uniforms, and carry county identification.

If you are considering a home water treatment system to solve an unusual odor or taste, first contact the Water Quality Hotline to determine the possible cause. The telephone number is 264-3835. If you have concerns or complaints about a sales pitch, call Consumer Protection at 903-3430.

