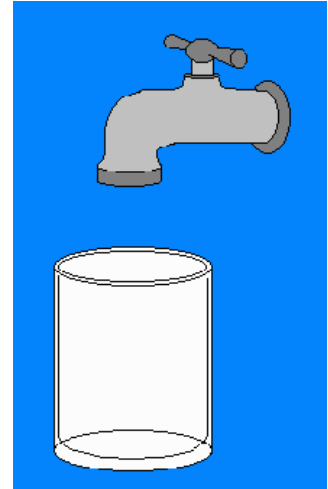


## FAQ: Taste and odor facts

### Does your drinking water taste or smell funny?

Taste and odor are aesthetic qualities of drinking water for which the noticeable intensity depends on the sensitivity of the individual, and are directly related to the type of compounds that may be present in the source water. Groundwater that is rich in salts and minerals can possess undesirable tastes and odors. However surface water supplies are more likely to have undesirable tastes and odors because of organics or microorganisms.

In Salt Lake County your drinking water comes from various ground and surface water sources, some as far as the Provo River drainage basin. Drinking water captured in local reservoirs as snowmelt and rainfall can occasionally develop taste and odor problems by the time it reaches your tap. The most common tastes and odors are a chlorinous or "swimming pool" odor; and a musty or earthy taste and/or odor.



### Types of Tastes and Odors

#### Chlorine

During the treatment process, chlorine is added to water as a disinfectant to kill any potential disease causing organisms, before it is distributed to homes and businesses. Some individuals are more sensitive to chlorine and can detect a chlorinous or medicinal taste or odor in the water as a result of chlorine use.

#### Musty or earthy

An earthy or musty smell, particularly in warmer water, may be the result of an algal bloom in the water supply. Algae thrive at different times of the year in reservoirs. In Salt Lake County, musty or earthy tastes and odors have historically occurred in late summer and fall. Although Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District's treatment plants are able to remove the algae, some of their metabolites may be left behind. The two most common metabolites are geosmin and 2-methylisoborneol (MIB). Even though these compounds are harmless, the human senses of taste and smell are extremely sensitive to these compounds and some individuals can detect them in water at concentrations as low as 5 parts per trillion.

#### Other

Other common odors you may occasionally notice in your tap water are fishy, grassy or marshy odors. These are also typically caused by a variety of compounds produced by different types of algae.

### Monitoring and treatment

In addition to laboratory analyses which measure the concentration of taste-and-odor-causing compounds, Jordan Valley Water also conducts flavor profile analyses on a regular basis. Flavor profile analysis uses a group of trained panelists to identify flavors and/or aromas in raw and treated waters.

Water treatment plants typically utilize chemicals or adsorbents to control taste and odor problems such as powdered activated carbon, potassium permanganate, or ozone so that it meets taste and odor standards outlined by State and Federal regulations.

Be assured that in spite of a slight taste or odor, the water is safe to drink! **For more information** about your water quality, contact the Jordan Valley Water Treatment Plant at 446-2000.

