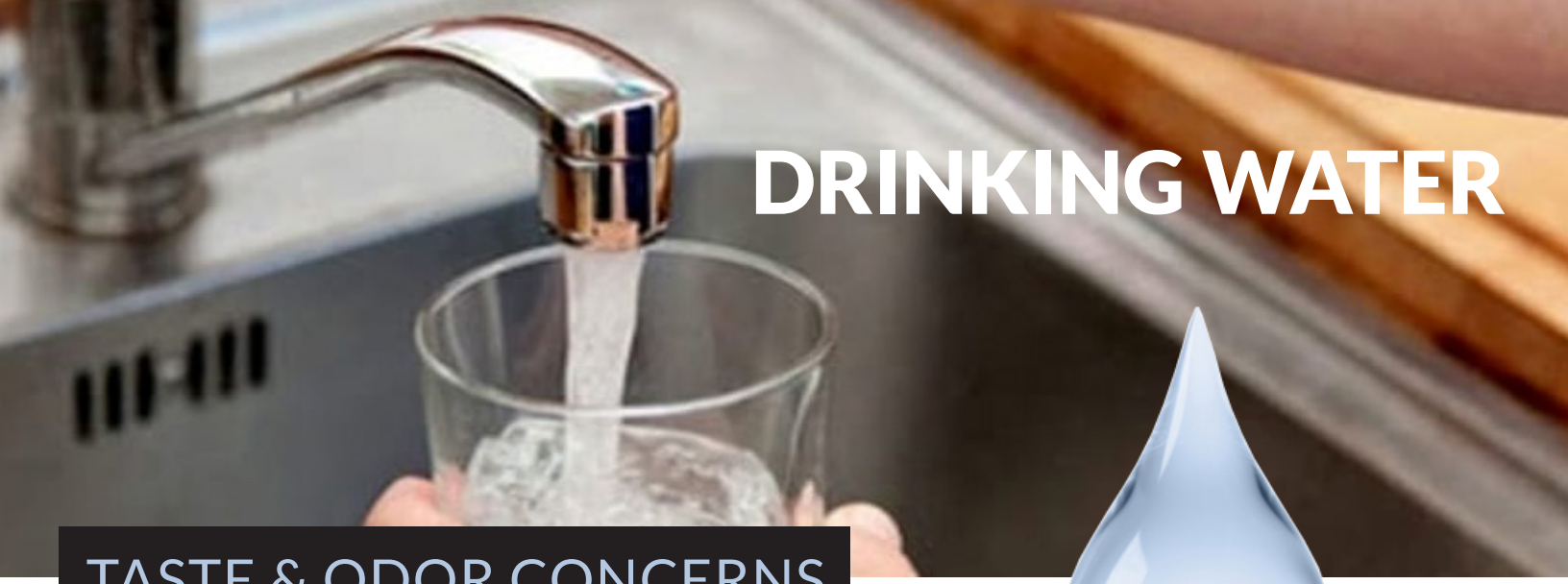

DRINKING WATER

TASTE & ODOR CONCERNS

Geosmin and MIB

Geosmin and Methyl-Isoborneol (MIB) are naturally occurring compounds that have an earthy/musty taste and odor. Geosmin and MIB do not pose a public health risk, but their presence can cause concern about the quality of drinking water. Geosmin and MIB are some of the most difficult compounds to remove during water treatment.

The Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA), Cobb County Water System's wholesale supplier, routinely monitors for geosmin and MIB in the drinking water supply. Additionally, CCMWA conducts testing upstream of the intake for the treatment plant. Proactive sampling allows the Authority to be aware and provide additional treatment steps when we notice an increase in geosmin and MIB levels. Beginning in late spring and through late fall, during the time of year that the compounds are typically at higher levels, CCMWA tests for geosmin and MIB on a weekly basis.

Generally, geosmin & MIB become a taste & odor issue for customers when levels are in the range of .01 nanograms per liter (ng/L, or 10 parts per trillion), but some people who are particularly sensitive may notice it at levels above .005 ng/l. To put it in simpler terms, that would equate to one-half of one cent in a billion dollars.

What are the Effects of Geosmin and MIB?
Geosmin and MIB produce a musty, earthy smell and taste in drinking water, however neither compound is harmful at levels present in drinking water.

What Causes Increased Levels of Geosmin and MIB?
Some kinds of algae and bacteria present in lake and reservoir water naturally produce geosmin and MIB. An increase in this production typically happens during late summer into early fall when water levels are low and water temperatures are warm.

What Can be Done About Geosmin and MIB?
Geosmin and MIB cannot be removed from water using normal treatment processes; advanced treatment is required. During a geosmin or MIB occurance, before source water enters water treatment facility, *Powdered Activated Carbon* is added at the intake. Prior to the water being pumped into the distribution system, a portion of the treated water is further treated with *Granular Activated Carbon* to further remove Geosmin and MIB compounds from the water.

Can I do anything to help my water taste better?
When Geosmin and MIB are noticeable, customers can add lemon juice and chill water in the refrigerator to improve the taste and reduce odors.

WATER SYSTEM
COBB COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
1832
QUALITY & SERVICE