

Q&A – Changes to your water supply

What does this mean for me?

The hardness of your tap water may increase if we have to take more water from ground water sources as the dry spell continues. Ground water undergoes the same rigorous treatment process as our other water sources such as lake water. Your water will continue to be of the quality expected by the Drinking Water Inspectorate and will be safe to drink and use.

When are the changes to my tap water being made?

Details of the likely date for the change to your water supply can be found in the email, text or letter that we sent to you.

Will I notice a difference when you change the blend?

Some people may notice a change in the taste - tea and coffee may taste slightly different, or the chlorine used in our treatment process may be more noticeable - but this is perfectly normal when harder sources of water such as ground water is added to the blend. Your drinking water still meets all water quality standards required by the Drinking Water Inspectorate and is safe to drink and use as normal. Blending water from different sources is absolutely safe for us to do so, we have blended your water supplies previously.

Adding ground water will not make your water discoloured – if you experience discoloured water this won't be related to the changes we're making to your drinking water so if you experience discoloured water at any time please call us on 0345 672 3723 so we can investigate this.

Will the change in water make me ill?

Your water will continue to remain of the quality expected by the Drinking Water Inspectorate and be safe to drink and to use.

We carry out regular routine testing of the water supply both at source and at customers' taps to ensure it meets the high water quality standards expected. There is no reason to believe that the water supply will cause illness as hard water is not harmful to health.

Ground water undergoes the same rigorous testing and treatment process as our other drinking water sources to ensure it meets all water quality standards.

Will the change cause my kettle to make a popping sound?

It may do - when we have changed the water blend in other areas, some customers told us their kettles made a popping sound.

The sound comes from tiny bubbles forming and collapsing as the water boils and harder water sometimes produces more bubbles because the minerals in the water can produce carbon dioxide gas when it heats up (like in fizzy drinks).

The bubbles pop when they rise to the surface which is the sound you may hear but there's no need to be concerned.

Changes to your water supply

Do I need products such as Calgon in my washing machine?

Further information on whether your machine requires additional softening products will be available in the instructions leaflet or you may wish to take advice from the manufacturer.

Do I need to install a water softener?

Installation of a water softener is a decision for the individual. The water quality meets all of the required regulations. If a softener is installed it should not be on the kitchen tap used for food preparation and drinking. Most water softeners work by replacing hardness with sodium. Too much sodium can be a problem for infants and those on low sodium diets. Softeners must be obtained from a reputable supplier, information is available from Water UK and British Water

Could the water cause skin rashes/eczema?

Hard water doesn't affect skin but soap residue can do. Harder water means less soap lather. People sometimes use more soap and that can affect sensitive skin.

Do I need to use bottled water for drinking or for babies' bottles?

You do not need to use bottled water. We understand some might choose to use bottled water. Some brands of bottled water are very hard and contain lots of minerals. Some bottled waters contain sodium or nitrates which are not good for babies. Always check the label if you do decide to use bottled water. Most well-known brands of bottles water sold in the UK are suitable but you need to ensure sodium is less than 250 mg/l and nitrate is less than 50 mg NO₃/l.

Will you be supplying bottled water?

Your tap water meets all water quality standards required by the Drinking Water Inspectorate and is safe to drink, so there is no need to use bottled water and we will not supply bottled water.

Will I be compensated for this change?

Although we are planning on increasing ground water to the overall blend, the water still meets all water quality standards set by the Drinking Water Inspectorate and is safe to drink and use normally. We therefore will not be offering compensation for this change. We'll need to continue to provide you with the blended water until key water resources have refilled adequately.

How do I get more information?

You can find more details on our web site:

unitedutilities.com/yourwater

unitedutilities.com/water-hardness

- Give us your feedback on www.unitedutilities.com/waterfeedback
- Contact us via Twitter or Facebook
- Call us on 0345 672 3723