

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Drinking water warning; City of Genoa has high levels of nitrate in drinking water

[Columbus]—The regular, monthly sample for nitrate analysis collected from a City of Genoa well indicates that the average concentration of nitrate is 11 mg/L (milligrams per liter). This is in violation of the established nitrate drinking water standard of 10 mg/L. Two samples, collected from the system on September 21, 2020, confirmed the level of concentration.

Nitrate is a concern for infants because they cannot process nitrates in the same way adults can. Because of this, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE DHHS) advises that City of Genoa water should not be given to infants under 6 months old and it should not be used to make infant formula. Additional guidance from NE DHHS regarding City of Genoa water includes:

- **DO NOT allow infants, pregnant women, or nursing mothers to drink the water.** Infants below the age of six months who drink water containing nitrate in excess of the MCL may experience shortness of breath and have a blue tint to their lips and skin due to a lack of oxygen. This is referred to as, “blue baby syndrome.” Symptoms in infants can develop rapidly. If symptoms occur, seek medical attention immediately.
- **Water, juice, and formula for children under six months of age should not be prepared with tap water.** Alternative water, such as bottled water or water filtered to remove nitrate, should be used for infants until further notice.
- **Do not boil the water.** Boiling, freezing, or letting water stand does not reduce the nitrate level. Excessive boiling can make the nitrates more concentrated, because nitrates remain behind when the water evaporates.

Adults and children older than six months can drink the tap water. However, if you have specific health concerns, you may wish to consult your doctor.

Nitrates in drinking water can come from natural, industrial, or agricultural sources (including septic systems and run-off). Levels of nitrate in drinking water can vary throughout the year.

The NE DHHS and the City of Genoa will let citizens know when the amount of nitrate is again below the limit.

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