

TOWN OF CARSTAIRS SPRING RUN OFF Q & A

1. What is spring run-off? Spring run-off refers to the high water flows encountered when warmer temperatures cause snow in the watershed to melt. This can cause higher than normal stream flows and flooding in low-lying areas. This melt-water will carry with it dead and decaying organic material such as last year's leaves and grasses, as well as mud and silt stirred up by faster moving water.

2. Is the water safe to drink during spring run-off? Yes. The water that leaves the Antony Henday Water Treatment Plant meets or exceeds all federal and provincial environmental standards. The Town performs rigorous testing to ensure water quality, and continually upgrades the plant's infrastructure and processes to meet improving environmental standards.

3. Why does the water taste and smell different? The Red Deer River is the source of drinking water for Carstairs and area residents. Because the river picks up mud, silt, and other organic material during spring run-off, these materials can give the water an earthy odor or taste. The Water Treatment Plant removes most of these organics, however due to their high levels during spring run-off; enough of the organics may remain to be noticeable.

4. Why do I smell chlorine in the water?

Chlorine is a disinfectant used in the treatment process year-round. During spring run-off, some of the remaining organic material reacts with the chlorine in the treated water. This makes the "swimming pool" smell more noticeable in the spring.

5. How long will the taste and smell last?

Each spring is different, but on average run-off conditions last between three and six weeks. Mountain run-off in late June and early July can also cause run-off conditions, as will heavy rainfall events.

6. How can I combat the smell and taste in the spring?

Residents can put water in a pitcher to let it aerate. Adding lemons or filtering the water through a consumer charcoal filter can help improve the smell and taste.

7. I've noticed a slight color to the water when filling the sink or tub. Why?

Organic material will actually dissolve and stain the water a light brown color similar to the action of tea leaves in a cup. The treatment process removes most of the color, however, at times when the organic load is high, some color may be carried into the treated water.