

wellcare™ information for you about **TCE (Trichloroethylene)**

What is TCE?

Trichloroethylene (TCE) is a colorless liquid with a somewhat sweet odor, like chloroform, and a sweet, burning taste. It is used as a solvent to remove grease from metal parts and also in adhesives, paint removers, typewriter correction fluids and spot removers used by dry cleaners.

Major environmental releases of TCE are due to air emissions from metal degreasing plants. Wastewater from metal finishing, paint and ink manufacturing and electrical/electronic component and rubber processing industries may also contain TCE. Even small amounts of TCE can contaminate large quantities of ground water.

The chemical can leach through soil and into ground water. TCE easily dissolves in water and remains there for a long time. The EPA reports that major TCE releases to land have occurred in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Georgia, Texas and Massachusetts, while releases to water have occurred in West Virginia.

What are the health effects of TCE?

Based on testing on animals, TCE may cause cancer, birth defects and genetic damage. The extent of these effects is not yet clear.

How do I test for TCE?

The EPA requires public water suppliers to test for TCE and treat water with levels above 5 parts per billion. Well owners should follow this standard.

What are the treatments for TCE in drinking water?

An effective treatment is the use of a GAC (granular activated carbon) filter in combination with a reverse osmosis distillation device, also known as "packed tower aeration."

For more information on your ground water

Your local well contractor, health department, cooperative extension service and state environmental or natural resources department can provide more information about ground water in your area. Check the telephone directory or search the web under “water wells” or “government agencies.”

For more information about wells and other wellcare™ publications

wellcare™ is a program of the **Water Systems Council (WSC)**. WSC is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promote the wider use of wells as modern and affordable safe drinking water systems and to protect ground water resources nationwide.



Contact us at 888-395-1033 or visit www.watersystemscouncil.org

Other wellcare™ publications:

A Consumer's Guide to Water Wells

A Consumer's Guide to Well Testing & Disinfection

wellcare™ Info Sheet: Home Drinking Water Treatment Devices

wellcare™ Info Sheet: Water Quality – arsenic, bacteria, chromium, iron, MTBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether), nitrate, radon, radium, sulfur and TCE (trichloroethylene)

Other organizations you may want to contact:

Water Quality Association	630-505-0160	www.wqa.org
The Ground Water Foundation	800-858-4844	www.groundwater.org
American Ground Water Trust	603-228-5444	www.agwt.org
National Ground Water Association	800-551-7379	www.ngwa.org

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