



Part Two of Series

Chloramines:

Special Care for Dialysis Patients & Aquatic Life

In **May 2002**, the disinfectant used by Pinellas County Utilities for the treatment of our potable (drinking) water will be chloramines instead of the current disinfectant, chlorine. *Chloramine*, a form of disinfectant produced by combining chlorine with ammonia, is a disinfectant that destroys potentially harmful bacteria should they enter the potable water system.

Chloramines have been used safely in the United States and Canada for many years. For most normal uses of potable water, chloraminated water is the same as chlorinated water. There are two groups of people, however, who need to take **special care** with chloraminated water: **kidney dialysis patients and fish owners**. Chloramines must be removed from the water used in the kidney dialysis process and from water that is used in fish tanks and ponds.

Kidney Dialysis

- Kidney dialysis patients can safely drink, cook, and bathe in chloraminated water. However, chloramines must be removed from the water used in kidney dialysis machines.
- Dialysis systems will require some modifications to remove the chloramines. Check with your physician to be certain the necessary changes are made.
- All medical facilities that perform kidney dialysis have been notified of this change to chloraminated water treatment. According to the ESRD [End Stage Renal Disease] federal regulations, these facilities are responsible for purifying the water that enters the dialysis machines.

Aquatic Life

- Chloramines are toxic to saltwater and freshwater fish, reptiles, turtles and amphibians, and must be removed from any water to be used for fish tanks or ponds.
- Chloramines in water do not dissipate (evaporate) as readily as chlorine, therefore, specific steps must be taken for their removal.
- Chloramines can be removed from the water by using a water conditioner specifically designed to remove chloramines or by using a granular activated carbon filter. Your pet products supplier should be able to provide any further guidance you may need on these products.
- Ammonia can be toxic to fish. Biological filters, natural zeolites, and pH control methods are effective in reducing the toxic effects of excess ammonia that may be present in aquarium water due to the chemical removal of chloramines.