

FAQs

Naegleria fowleri at Murweh Shire Council

Question	Response
How long has this been in the water?	<p>This is the first confirmed detection in both townships, though the risk of its presence in unchlorinated water has been acknowledged.</p> <p><i>Naegleria fowleri</i> is a naturally occurring environmental organism and can be present in source waters when the temperature conditions are above 25°C.</p>
Why don't we regularly test for this/ Do all Queensland water supplies need to be tested for <i>Naegleria fowleri</i> ?	<p>Testing for <i>Naegleria</i> species, and in particular <i>Naegleria Fowleri</i> is a specialised process.</p> <p>The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines recommends studies into susceptible water supplies but do not support universal monitoring of <i>Naegleria</i>.</p>
What is the short-term solution?	<p>Residents who are concerned about their personal health should consult their medical practitioner.</p> <p>Council is undertaking sampling of the drinking water system to determine the extent of the issue.</p> <p>Chlorination of the drinking water system is proposed as a short-term measure to control the risk.</p>
What is the long-term solution?	<p>The Water Supply Regulator is working very closely with Queensland Health and Murweh Shire Council to identify long term solutions.</p> <p>The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines state that constant chlorine residuals above 0.5mg/L adequately controls the risk of <i>Naegleria</i> in drinking water supplies.</p>
Has council managed this appropriately?	<p>The Water Supply Regulator has advised Murweh Shire Council to assess the risk of <i>Naegleria</i> in their drinking water systems and manage the risk appropriately.</p> <p>Regarding this occurrence, Council has been working collaboratively with Queensland Health and the Water Supply Regulator to implement advice received.</p>
What about other drinking water schemes in Queensland?	<p>Un-disinfected drinking water schemes which regularly exceed 25°C support the growth of <i>Naegleria</i>.</p> <p>Drinking Water providers must assess risks to their drinking water services as part of their Drinking Water Quality Management Plans.</p>

Question	Response
	<p>The Water Supply Regulator works closely with drinking water providers and Queensland Health to ensure that risks are adequately assessed and managed.</p> <p>The Water Supply Regulator is reviewing other similar water systems in this context to ensure that appropriate risk management systems are in place.</p>
How did this contamination occur?	<p>Naegleria is found in the natural environment and typically enters water supply systems via breaks in the sealed drinking water system.</p> <p>Maintaining a multiple barrier approach via good infrastructure management practices and residual disinfection prevents contamination of drinking water supplies.</p>
How do they clean the water to make it safe?	<p>Free chlorine residuals at 0.5mg/L or higher is effective at controlling Naegleria in drinking water systems.</p> <p>The risk of Naegleria is associated with water being forcibly injected into the nasal cavity and not when ingested.</p> <p>While boiling the water prior to consumption is not required it will inactivate any microbial organisms that may be present, including Naegleria.</p>
Does this include bore water? (Backyard bores?)	<p>As Naegleria is found in the natural environment, it can enter water supplies at the source or through breaks in the sealed system.</p> <p>If you are living on a rural property, follow advice from Queensland Health about safe water on rural properties.</p>