

# DRINKING WATER NOTICE

The RAF Lakenheath Water System has detected high levels of Nitrates

## **DO NOT GIVE THE WATER TO INFANTS UNDER 6 MONTHS OLD OR USE IT TO MAKE INFANT FORMULA**

On the morning of 11 July 2023, RAF Lakenheath daily water testing showed drinking reservoir nitrate levels of 17 milligrams/Liter (mg/L). This sample is above the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) nitrate standard maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 mg/L, but below the United Kingdom standard of 50 mg/L. Nitrate in drinking water is a serious health concern for infants less than six months old. Nitrate 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.

RAF Lakenheath took immediate steps to lower the nitrate level below 10 mg/L and returned the reservoir to the required levels by the afternoon of 11 July. We are continuing to flush and test the entire water system to ensure all possible drinking sources are below 10 mg/L. Out of an abundance of caution, RAF Lakenheath recommends any infants less than six months old refrain from using the base water supply until after 5pm on Friday, 14 July. Additionally, any water stored on 10 July should be discarded.

### **What should I do? What does this mean?**

- Infants below the age of six months should not drink from the RAF Lakenheath supply until after 5pm, 14 July. Infants below the age of six months who drink large quantities of water containing nitrate in could become seriously ill. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blue baby syndrome. Blue baby syndrome is indicated by blueness of the skin. Symptoms in infants can develop rapidly, with health deteriorating over a period of days. If symptoms occur, seek medical attention immediately.

- Ice, juice, and formula for children under six months of age should not be prepared with tap water that was affected by this variance. If this water was saved and stored for use, discard it at this time.

- Do not boil the water. Boiling, freezing, filtering, or letting water stand does not reduce the nitrate level. 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 (nitrate is a concern for infants because they can't process nitrates in the same way adults can). However, if you are pregnant or have specific health concerns, you may wish to consult your doctor.

### **What is being done?**

48<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Civil Engineers and bioenvironmental flight continue to flush the system and test for acceptable nitrate levels. Nitrates in the reservoir are below 10mg/L and the team continues to flush and test to ensure all base drinking sources are within acceptable levels, which we project for completion by Friday, 14 July.

For more information, please contact 48<sup>th</sup> Bioenvironmental Flight at DSN 226-8047 or 48<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Public Affairs at 48FW.PA@US.AF.MIL