

Total Dissolved Solids

One parameter on the Secondary list that is related to water hardness is Total Dissolved Solids (TDS). TDS is a measure of all dissolved minerals in the water. The recommended maximum standard for TDS in drinking water is 500 milligrams per liter (mg/L). Above this level, the taste and color of water may be affected, and it may leave deposits on appliances and dishes.

How Water Hardness is Classified

Water hardness is measured in the laboratory by the amount of calcium carbonate present. Although there is no set standard for the classification of water hardness, the following chart provides generally accepted classifications based on the concentration of calcium carbonate.

Classification of Water Hardness	
Concentration in (mg/L)	Classification
0 to 60	Soft
61 to 120	Moderately Hard
120 to 180	Hard
More than 180	Very Hard

Source: United States Geological Survey (USGS); [The USGS Water Science School](#)

Mineral Deposits

Water that is classified as hard will leave mineral deposits on faucets and dishes, and may have a salty taste, but will not negatively affect human health. Some parts of the country have very hard water with typical concentrations of calcium carbonate ranging from 200 to 300 mg/L in drinking water.

Groundwater in Colorado

Colorado's groundwater supplies are naturally high in calcium and magnesium ions, so groundwater is usually classified as being hard. Conversely, surface water sources contain lower concentrations of hardness ions. Therefore, any time a water provider has to switch supplies from surface water to groundwater, or increase the ratio of groundwater to surface water, customers may notice mineral deposits on dishes and changes in taste. Water providers can provide tips to manage these aesthetic changes such as using vinegar to remove hard water deposits on faucets or dishes.



Additional Questions?

Contact Adams County Health Department at 303.288.6816.

