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**WATER  
INFO NOW**  
The latest information about the EMPACT water  
quality information program

March 2003

### Public information effort begins



## Water Quality is Important!

To most people "Water Quality" means water that meets every health standard, appears clear and clean, and is free of unpleasant tastes or odors. You may be interested in knowing the levels of minerals or chemicals that are found in your water and how to use this information in your daily life. From special diets to maintaining your fish tank, keeping up to date on your water quality can provide information you can use.

In future issues of this newsletter, the EMPACT team will share with you the reasons why knowing about the quality of your water is important to you and can help you make wise consumer decisions. You can be confident that the water you receive is carefully sampled, monitored and tested daily by Tucson Water as the utility works to provide consistent and affordable high quality water to its customers.

## The EMPACT Program

Tucson Water has teamed with a diverse group of local water, environmental, health care, and educational organizations to gather water quality information and develop new ways to communicate that information to citizens. In this way, important water quality information not only reaches Tucson Water customers, but also the many special interest or special needs groups with which each partner works.

The EMPACT Program is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency. EMPACT stands for Environmental Monitoring for Public Access and Community Tracking.

# EMPACT

**EMPACT News - Water Info Now** is published by the EMPACT Team led by Tucson Water and provides up-to-date information about water quality in the greater Tucson area. To be added to the mailing list, please call 791-5080, ext.1372 or email [DQuinta1@ci.tucson.az.us](mailto:DQuinta1@ci.tucson.az.us).

*Esta informacion esta disponible en español. Por favor llame 791-5080 x1372.*

For more information about the EMPACT program for Tucson's water quality reporting, visit the Tucson Water web site at [www.ci.tucson.az.us/water](http://www.ci.tucson.az.us/water). For more information about the USEPA's EMPACT programs nationwide, visit the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/empact/index.htm>.

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# Community Partners

## Tucson Water's EMPACT Community Partners

These organizations have joined with Tucson Water in the EMPACT Program to develop and communicate water quality information to the residents of Tucson.

Tucson Unified School District

U. of A., Department of Soil, Water & Environmental Science

U. of A., Water Resources Research Center

**U. of A., Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center**

U. of A., National Science Foundation, Water Quality Center

Pima County Health Department

Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Pima County Wastewater Management Department

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Tucson-Pima Public Library

City of Tucson Department of Neighborhood Resources

### Water Quality in the News

You can find this game and additional water quality educational information developed for the EMPACT Program on the SWEHSC web site at <http://swehsc.pharmacy.arizona.edu/coep>.

## Peoria Crisis Shows Value of Chlorination

The tragic deaths of two children from meningitis several months ago in Peoria, Arizona are still under investigation, but it is believed they somehow contracted the Naegleria fowleri amoeba from the local water system. Although there's no way to know if this tragedy could have been prevented, and the amoeba that caused the disease is almost never found in groundwater supplies, it's valuable to note that a number of the small water companies in this area were not adding chlorine to their water supplies before the accident occurred. (All major water providers in Maricopa County disinfect their water.)

Adding chlorine kills most waterborne microorganisms that can cause diseases in humans and animals. Chlorine is the most common method in the United States of ensuring that water is safe from these contaminants.

Sometimes chlorine can give a bad taste or odor to water, but the benefits it provides far outweigh that occasional inconvenience. The high levels of waterborne diseases in developing nations are directly linked to the lack of water disinfection facilities. In the U.S., it is primarily the use of chlorine that keeps us from having similar problems and Tucson Water uses chlorine in all the water it delivers. The Chlorine Chemistry Council website has more information on chlorine and its uses at [http://c3.org/chlorines\\_everyday\\_uses/before.html](http://c3.org/chlorines_everyday_uses/before.html).

## No Evidence of Perchlorate in Tucson's Water

Environmental and water quality professionals are studying three areas in northern Utah where groundwater has become contaminated by perchlorate, a toxic chemical used in rocket fuel in the 1950s. The contaminant has been detected in small amounts in the Magna, Utah (near Salt Lake City) drinking water system.

Environmental health officials are still working to determine what amounts of perchlorate, first identified in 1997, are dangerous to human health. Tucson Water tests its water distribution system regularly for perchlorate along with more than 100 other chemicals and has not found any evidence of it in the water that is delivered to customers. For more information about perchlorate, visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Groundwater website at [www.epa.gov/safewater/](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/).

### Utah Sites Under Study

## Research, Education are Tops at the U. of A. Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center

While the Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center (SWEHSC) is committed to research on the health effects of environmental agents, the Center also sees education as a critical part of its mission. "The focus of our program is developing educational tools that will integrate environmental health sciences into education programs," says Marti Lindsey who heads up the Community Outreach and Education Program for SWEHSC.

Since promoting community understanding of health impacts and the environment is so important to the Center, they were a perfect fit for the EMPACT Program.

"The EMPACT Program has given us a unique opportunity to develop specific educational materials for students concerning water quality and water quality information," says Lindsey. "For example, 'The Water Concentration Game' was created for kids and adults."

### Partner in focus

The keys to the EMPACT project are its community focus and the circle of partners that have joined Tucson Water in developing water quality information and communicating about it to citizens. Each issue of EMPACT News will feature one of the project partners.



Eleanor Navarro (l) and Marti Lindsey, Director, have created a number of educational materials directed to K-12 students for the EMPACT Program.

# Research, Education

