East Los Angeles District

2008 Water Quality Report

At California Water Service Company (Cal Water), we are committed to supplying you with high-quality water. We are pleased to provide this annual water quality report, which includes information about where your water comes from, what it contains, how it compares to state and federal standards, and how you can help us conserve water. It also explains the steps we take to protect your water supply.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please contact your local Customer Center. Also, please watch for bill inserts, where you will find announcements of any water-related public meetings or workshops, as well as important information about your water. Additional information and time-sensitive announcements about your water can be found at www.calwater.com.

Where Your Water Comes From

Cal Water has provided high-quality water utility services in the East Los Angeles area since 1928. In addition to the 26,600 customer connections in our East Los Angeles system, we serve 2,800 customer connections through operating contracts with the Cities of Commerce and Montebello. To meet our customers' needs, we use a combination of local groundwater and purchased water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), which is imported from the Colorado River and the State Water Project in northern California. The East Los Angeles water system currently includes 10 active wells, 29 booster pumps, 16 storage tanks, and three MWD connections.

EIA

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable. Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

In 2008, Cal Water completed the construction of a new iron and manganese treatment facility, and more are on track to be constructed. A new well was constructed in 2008, additional wells are being explored, and we are beginning the design of a new 2.5-million-gallon storage reservoir that we hope to complete in 2010.

Inside Water Quality

A water quality report represents literally hundreds of hours of work by dozens of people. At Cal Water, one of those people is Water Quality Project Manager Tarrah Henrie.

"I've always wanted a career that allows me to do good for the community," says Tarrah. "My first job out of college was working for an environmental consulting firm, and I learned a lot about how interesting and exciting the field is."

Tarrah's bachelor's degree in environmental soil and water science and master's degree in soil chemistry prepared her for a career in water quality. Since college, she has received certifications in water treatment and distribution, as well as backflow tester and backflow specialist certifications. Tarrah joined Cal Water in 2000.

Tarrah is just one of the highly educated and experienced scientists managing water quality at Cal Water. Says Tarrah, "We have a manager of laboratory services and six full-time scientists — two in the microbiology laboratory, two in the inorganic laboratory, and two in the organic laboratory. There are also six technicians who assist the scientists. Seven additional employees make sure we meet all water quality standards — five water quality project managers who review water-testing data, and two environmental project managers who monitor water discharge. District employees are also very important to water quality. They are the first people to identify an issue, so we certainly rely on them."

Meeting water quality standards means knowing the ins and outs of copious government regulations, but according to Tarrah, this isn't the most difficult part of the job. "Monitoring water quality doesn't stop when the work day ends. Just this month, one of our scientists stayed here until after midnight analyzing samples to ensure that we were meeting standards and doing everything possible to protect public health. Over the Thanksgiving holiday, our microbiologist came in to analyze samples after a water main repair. Project managers have to be available to receive those results and make the best decisions for our customers."

Tarrah says that if she could pass along just one message about water quality, it would be this: "We work hard to protect our customers, but we need the public's help, too. Chemicals that go on lawns, down storm drains, and into the trash can eventually end up in somebody's water. We all have to be vigilant and protect our precious water supply."

What About Fluoride?

Fluoride occurs naturally in many water sources. Cal Water does not add fluoride to your water supply; however, in November 2007, MWD began adding fluoride to the imported water we purchase to supplement local supplies. Because you receive a blend of imported water from MWD and local groundwater, the California Department of Public Health advises you not to give fluoride supplements to your children. The table inside this report lists the fluoride levels in your neighborhood.

Want to know more? For general information on water fluoridation, visit us online at www.calwater.com.

Drinking Water Source Assessment and Protection Program (DWSAPP)

By the end of 2002, Cal Water had submitted to the California Department of Public Health a DWSAPP report for each water source in the water system. The DWSAPP report identifies possible sources of contamination to aid in prioritizing cleanup and pollution prevention efforts. All reports are available for viewing or copying at our Customer Center.

The water sources in the East Los Angeles system are considered most vulnerable to contamination from gas stations, confirmed leaks, known contaminant plumes, chemical/petroleum storage, metal fabrication, and plastic producers.

We encourage customers to join us in our efforts to prevent water pollution and protect our most precious natural resource.

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Promoting Water-Use Efficiency

California's population continues to increase, while the amount of water available to Californians does not. Water supplies throughout the state have become more constrained due to periodic drought, aging infrastructure, and heightened environmental concerns.

That's why your efforts to use water wisely are important to ensuring that we have enough clean water for you and future generations.

Cal Water offers a variety of traditional and innovative programs to help you conserve. These include:

- Rebates on many water-efficient appliances.
- High-efficiency fixtures available at no charge to our customers.
- Educational materials on a variety of topics (conservation gardening, checking for leaks around the house, and more).
- Conservation-related events.
- School programs.

Visit www.calwater.com/conservation to learn more about programs available in your area, apply for an appliance rebate, request water-saving fixtures, and find other ways that Cal Water can help you conserve water.

Potential Sources of Contamination

All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

The sources of drinking water (both tap and bottled) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or human activity. Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.

Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.

Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.

Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum

production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, agricultural application, and septic systems.

Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the USEPA and the California Department of Public Health (Department) prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Department regulations also establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised people, such as those with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, those who have undergone organ transplants, those with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly people, and infants, can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice from their health care providers about drinking water. USEPA/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

Chloramine is used as a disinfectant for your water supply. Although chloraminated water may be used for drinking, bathing, cooking, cleaning scrapes, watering the garden, and most other uses, special precautions are required for dialysis patients, fish owners, and certain industries that use water in their manufacturing process. Informational brochures are available at our web site at www.calwater.com. If you have any questions about chloramine, please call our Customer Center at (323) 722-8601.

Q&A

Why do Cal Water employees sometimes open fire hydrants? Isn't that a waste of water?
This is a process known as "flushing." When necessary, it is done to remove sediment or sand from the water lines and ensure that water circulates adequately throughout the system. Fire hydrants may also be opened for testing purposes.

How does dirt or sand get in my water?
Dirt or sand can occur naturally in groundwater or enter water lines during water-line repair. Flushing helps remove dirt and sand in the water.

What causes white particles in my water?
Minerals can build up in water lines, home plumbing, and water heaters. If you notice white particles in your water or your pressure is lower than usual, check your faucet aerators for buildup (if your faucets do not have aerators, visit www.calwater.com/conservation to have some sent to you at no charge). It is also important to maintain your water heater as directed by the manufacturer.

What gives my water a milky or cloudy appearance?
This is usually caused by harmless air bubbles. If the water is allowed to sit, the air will dissipate and the water will clear. If it doesn't, contact your local Customer Center.

What causes an odor in my hot water?
If you detect an odor in your hot water that is not present in your cold water, you may need to adjust, flush, or repair your water heater. Check with the manufacturer for details. If you detect an odor in both the hot and cold water, inform your local Customer Center.

What causes color in the water?
Naturally occurring organics and metals can give your water color. These typically do not pose a health hazard, but you should report colored water to your local Customer Center. If a faucet has not been used for a period of time, rust or residue from pipes may have collected, discoloring your water. Let the water run for a minute, and it should return to normal (while the faucet runs, collect the water in a bucket for use in your garden).

Should I worry about pharmaceuticals in my water?
In 2008, news stories warned about the possibility of trace amounts of pharmaceuticals in tap water. It is important to remember that the quantities of pharmaceutical substances found were measured in parts per trillion — amounts so small that typical water quality laboratories couldn't even detect them. Although these trace amounts of pharmaceuticals do not appear to pose any significant health risk, Cal Water reminds you that you can help protect your water supply by responsibly disposing of drugs that are expired or no longer needed. Do not flush them down the toilet or put them in the sink.

Should I buy a home filtration unit?
Home water-treatment units are often used to improve the aesthetic qualities of the water, but according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, they are rarely necessary for health reasons. If you choose to install a home treatment unit, be sure to follow the manufacturer's maintenance instructions, because improperly maintained units can cause water quality problems. For example, bacteria can grow in carbon filters that are not replaced as recommended.

Is bottled water safer than tap water?
Both tap and bottled water must meet strict water quality standards, but tap water is subject to more frequent testing. Although bottled water is generally not better quality than what comes out of your tap, a Cal Water customer can get hundreds of gallons of tap water for the average price of a 20-ounce container of bottled water.

If you have any questions, please contact David Karraker, District Manager, at (323) 722-8601.

How to Read This Table

We test your water for more than 100 regulated contaminants. **The table in this report lists only those that were detected.**

The table shows water quality test results divided into two main sections: "primary standards" and "secondary standards." Primary standards protect public health by limiting the levels of contaminants in drinking water. Secondary standards are limits for substances that could affect the water's taste, odor, or appearance.

Definitions

Public Health Goal (PHG): The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. PHGs are set by the California Environmental Protection Agency.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG): The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL): The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. Primary MCLs are set as close to the PHGs (or MCLGs) as are economically and technologically feasible. Secondary MCLs are set to protect the odor, taste, and appearance of drinking water.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG): The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs are set by the USEPA.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL): The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment that may not be exceeded at the consumer's tap.

Notification Level (NL): A health-based advisory level for an unregulated contaminant in drinking water. It is used by the California Department of Public Health to provide guidance to drinking water systems.

Primary Drinking Water Standard (PDWS): MCLs and MRDLs for contaminants that affect health, along with their monitoring, reporting, and water treatment requirements.

Regulatory Action Level (AL): The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

Treatment Technique (TT): A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

Notes

[1]While your drinking water meets the federal and state standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. The arsenic standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. The USEPA continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic, which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects, such as skin damage and circulatory problems.

[2]Cal Water does not add fluoride to its groundwater supply. However, low levels of fluoride occur naturally. In November 2007, MWD began fluoridating its treated surface water, which Cal Water purchases. The fluoride concentrations indicated under "Purchased Surface Water" are the results of samples collected from the effluent of MWD treatment plants after fluoride was added. Since the system receives a blend of naturally fluoridated groundwater and fluoridated surface water, fluoride levels are checked throughout the system monthly. The fluoride concentrations indicated under "Distribution System-Wide" are the results of these samples. The optimal fluoride level for the East Los Angeles system is 0.8 ppm, with a control range of 0.7–1.3 ppm.

[3]The average nitrate level was 21 ppm, with a maximum level of 27 ppm. We are closely monitoring nitrate levels. Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 45 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. Such nitrate levels in drinking water can interfere with the capacity of the infant's blood to carry oxygen, resulting in a serious illness; symptoms include shortness of breath and blueness of the skin. Nitrate levels above 45 ppm may also affect the ability of the blood to carry oxygen in other individuals, such as pregnant women and those with certain specific enzyme deficiencies. If you are caring for an infant or you are pregnant, you should seek advice from your health care provider.

[4]For surface water systems, the treatment technique dictates that the turbidity level of the filtered water be less than or equal to 0.3 NTU in 95% of the measurements taken each month and shall not exceed 1 NTU at any time. Turbidity is a measurement of the cloudiness of water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system.

[5]Some people who drink water containing bromate in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

[6]Total organic carbon (TOC) has no health effects; however, TOC provides a medium for the formation of disinfection byproducts. These byproducts include THMs and HAAs. Drinking water containing these byproducts in excess of the MCL may lead to adverse health effects, liver or kidney problems, or nervous system effects, and may lead to an increased risk of cancer. Concerns regarding disinfection byproducts are based upon exposure over many years.

[7]Manganese exceeds the SMCL of 50 ppb in four groundwater wells. One of these wells was taken out of service in June 2008. A new treatment facility became operational in December 2008, another treatment facility is being constructed for the third well, and the fourth well will be replaced with a new well in July 2009. SMCLs were established to protect you against unpleasant aesthetic effects, such as color, taste, odor, and/or the staining of plumbing fixtures and clothing. Exceeding these SMCLs does not pose a health risk.

[8]Some groundwater wells contain 1,4-dioxane at levels greater than the NL established by the California Department of Public Health (DPH). A NL is defined as a health-based advisory level for an unregulated contaminant in drinking water. DPH uses it to provide guidance to drinking water systems. DPH recommends taking a well out of service if the concentrations in the well exceed 100 times the NL. The concentrations in the system are significantly below this level.

µS/cm = measure of specific conductance
n/a = not applicable
ND = not detected
NTU = nephelometric turbidity unit
pCi/L = picoCuries per liter (measure of radioactivity)
ppb = parts per billion (micrograms per liter)
ppm = parts per million (milligrams per liter)
ppt = parts per trillion (nanograms per liter)
SMCL = secondary maximum contaminant level

PRIMARY DRINKING WATER STANDARDS						GROUND WATER		PURCHASED SURFACE WATER		DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM WIDE		
Radiological	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source of Substance
Gross alpha particle activity	2005–2008	pCi/L	15	(0)	No	ND–5.4	0.6	ND–9.3	4.7	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits
Radium 228	2005–2008	pCi/L	5	0.019 (0)	No	ND–1.1	0.03	ND		n/a		Erosion of natural deposits
Uranium	2005–2008	pCi/L	20	0.43	No	ND 3.4	2.0	1.6–3.7	2.7	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits
Inorganic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	MCL (SMCL)	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source of Substance
Aluminum	2006–2008	ppm	1 (0.2)	0.6	No	ND		0.06–0.28	0.14	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits; residue from some surface water treatment processes
Arsenic[1]	2006–2008	ppb	10	0.004	No	ND–8.2	3.6	ND–2.9	2.4	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards; glass and electronics production wastes
Barium	2006–2008	ppm	1	2	No	ND–0.17	0.05	ND–125	78	n/a		Discharges of oil-drilling waste and from metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits
Chromium	2006–2008	ppb	50	(100)	No	ND–11	2	ND		n/a		Discharge from steel and pulp mills and chrome plating; erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (naturally occurring)	2006–2008	ppm	2	1	No	0.2–0.4	0.3	n/a		0.2–1.1	0.6	Erosion of natural deposits; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Fluoride (treatment)[2]	2008	ppm	2	1	No	n/a		0.6–1.0	n/a			Water additive that promotes strong teeth
Nitrate (as nitrate)[3]	2008	ppm	45	45	No	ND–27	21	ND		n/a		Runoff and leaching from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks and sewage; erosion of natural deposits
Nitrite (as nitrogen)	2006–2008	ppm	1	1	No	ND–0.24	0.03	ND–0.9	0.6	n/a		Discharge from petroleum, glass, and metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits; discharge from mines and chemical manufacturers; runoff from livestock lots (feed additive)
Perchlorate	2008	ppb	6	6	No	ND–6	0.1	ND		n/a		Perchlorate is an inorganic chemical used in solid rocket propellant, fireworks, explosives, flares, matches, and a variety of industries. It usually gets into drinking water as a result of environmental contamination from historic aerospace or other industrial operations that used or use, store, or dispose of perchlorate and its salts.
Selenium	2006–2008	ppb	50	(50)	No	ND–6	0.8	ND		n/a		Discharge from petroleum, glass, and metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits; discharge from mines and chemical manufacturers; runoff from livestock lots (feed additive)
	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Highest Level	Lowest Monthly Percent	Highest Level	Lowest Monthly Percent	Highest Level	Lowest Monthly Percent	Source of Substance
Turbidity (surface water requiring filtration)[4]	2008	NTU	TT	n/a	No	n/a		0.06	100%	n/a		Soil runoff
Organic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source of Substance
1,1-Dichloroethylene	2008	ppb	6	10	No	ND–6.5	2.8	ND		n/a		Discharge from industrial chemical factories
Tetrachloroethylene (PCE)	2008	ppb	5	0.06	No	ND–3.1	1.5	ND		n/a		Discharge from factories, dry cleaners, and auto shops (metal degreaser)
Trichloroethylene (TCE)	2008	ppb	5	0.8	No	ND–4.4	0.7	ND		n/a		Discharge from metal-degreasing sites and other factories
Disinfection Byproducts	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Highest Annual Average	Range	Highest Annual Average	Range	Highest Annual Average	Source of Substance
Bromate[5]	2007	ppb	10	(0)	No	n/a		4.4–10	7.8	n/a		Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Total haloacetic acids	2008	ppb	60	n/a	No	n/a		n/a		ND–28.4	12.4	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination
Total trihalomethanes	2008	ppb	80	n/a	No	n/a		n/a		ND–69.5	27.3	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination
Disinfectant and DBP Precursor	Year Tested	Unit	MRDL	MRDLG	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source of Substance
Chlorine	2008	ppm	4	4	No	n/a		n/a		ND–2.2	0.5	Drinking water disinfectant added for treatment
Chloramine	2008	ppm	4	4	No	n/a		n/a		0.2–2.6	1.7	Drinking water disinfectant added for treatment
Total organic carbon[6]	2008	ppm	TT	n/a	No	n/a		3.1–5.1	2.2	n/a		Naturally present in the environment
OTHER REGULATED SUBSTANCES												
Metals	Year Tested	Unit	AL	PHG	Exceeded Standard?	90th Percentile	Samples > AL	90th Percentile	Samples > AL	90th Percentile	Samples > AL	Source of Substance
Copper	2008	ppm	1.3	0.3	No	n/a		n/a		0.12	0 of 52	Internal corrosion of household plumbing systems; discharge from industrial manufacturers; erosion of natural deposits
SECONDARY DRINKING WATER STANDARDS AND UNREGULATED COMPOUNDS												
Inorganic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	SMCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source of Substance
Boron	2008	ppm	NL=1	n/a	No	0.18–0.24	0.21	130–200	157	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits
Calcium	2006–2008	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	64–100	81	23–74	50	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits
Chloride	2006–2008	ppm	500	n/a	No	ND		72–104	89	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits; seawater influence
Chromium 6+	2008	ppb	n/a	n/a	No	ND 1.8	0.7	0.1–0.5	0.2	n/a		Discharge from steel and pulp mills and chrome plating; erosion of natural deposits
Color	2006–2008	Units	15	n/a	No	ND–1	0.3	1–3	2	n/a		Naturally occurring organic matter
Hardness	2006–2008	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	222–380	288	108–308	210	n/a		Municipal and industrial waste discharges
Iron	2006–2008	ppb	300	n/a	No	ND–104	6	ND		n/a		Erosion of natural deposits
Magnesium	2006–2008	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	12–32	21	11–29	21	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits
Manganese[7]	2006–2008	ppb	50	n/a	Yes	ND–189	25	ND		n/a		Leaching from natural deposits
Odor	2006–2008	Units	3	n/a	No	ND–1	0.7	2–3	2	n/a		Naturally occurring organic matter
pH	2008	Units	n/a	n/a	No	6.7–8.7	7.8	8.0–8.4	8.2	n/a		Inherent characteristic of water
Sodium	2006–2008	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	52–93	69	56–109	83	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits
Specific conductance	2006–2008	µS/cm	1600	n/a	No	732–1100	841	516–1090	813	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits; seawater influence
Sulfate	2006–2008	ppm	500	n/a	No	72–125	114	47–275	160	n/a		Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; industrial wastes
Total dissolved solids	2006–2008	ppm	1000	n/a	No	428–660	534	283–678	480	n/a		Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Turbidity (groundwater)	2006–2008	NTU	5	n/a	No	ND–0.2	0.08	n/a		n/a		Soil runoff
Vanadium	2008	ppb	NL=50	n/a	No	4.4–5	4.7	3.1–5.1	4.1	n/a		Erosion of natural deposits; manufacturing of alloys and steel
Disinfection Byproducts	Year Tested	Unit	MCL (SMCL)	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Highest Annual Average	Range	Highest Annual Average	Range	Highest Annual Average	Source of Substance
Chlorate	2008	ppb	n/a	n/a	No	n/a		16–52	n/a	n/a		Byproduct of drinking water chlorination; industrial processes
n-Nitrosodimethylamine	2008	ppt	NL=10	3	No	ND–6	0.9	ND–7.4	n/a	n/a		Byproduct of drinking water chlorination; industrial processes
Organic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	SMCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Highest Annual Average	Range	Highest Annual Average	Range	Highest Annual Average	Source of Substance
1,4-Dioxane[8]	2006–2008	ppb	NL=3	n/a	Yes	ND–8.5	4.6	ND		n/a		Industrial solvent or solvent stabilizer for chlorinated solvents or volatile organic compounds