

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Public Information and Education  
Department of Water Supply  
Monday-Friday 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
[www.hawaiidws.org](http://www.hawaiidws.org) click on link: *Information on  
Pharmaceutical Compounds*

Information on Department of Water Supply (DWS) Sources and  
Pharmaceutical Compounds

The majority of DWS-maintained drinking water supplies on the Hawaii Island originate from groundwater sources. The 22 total DWS water systems vary from small systems serving rural communities and agricultural areas to the Hilo and North Kona systems, which serve large populations and urbanized areas. There are over 50 deep wells and approximately 11 surface water, springs and tunnel sources spread over the island.

DWS source waters are far less prone to contamination by pharmaceutical compounds because the DWS typically pumps its water from underground aquifers or collects it from streams, which originate from designated and protected watersheds. This is different from other municipalities, which may draw their drinking water from the same location where treated wastewater is disposed into. In addition, DWS wells are usually grouted per the State – Commission on Water Resource Management’s Well construction standards, which are required to prevent the downward passage of pollutants or contaminants from the unsaturated subsurface zone down to the aquifer. These best management practices, in addition to others, are implemented to ensure the source waters remain of good quality.

While research has not demonstrated human health impacts from these compounds, the ongoing conversation should remind us of how precious our source waters are and the need to protect them from harmful substances.

The Department of Water Supply is committed to providing water that safely meets Environmental Protection Agency and the Safe Drinking Water Act requirements. The DWS agrees that any contamination to the island’s drinking water sources is a cause for concern. Thus, the DWS continues to ask for the public’s cooperation to help protect our island’s natural resources. DWS encourages policies and practices that protect source water from contaminants that may be introduced by pesticides, gasoline or industrial products. In addition, the federal Office of National Drug Control Policy recommends not flushing prescription drugs down the toilet unless the accompanying patient information specifically instructs it is safe to do so. The best and most cost-effective way to ensure safe water at the tap is to keep our source waters clean.

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