

HISTORIES OF GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FOURTH EDITION

12. Chemical fact sheets

12.1 Chemical contaminants in drinking-water

Zinc

History of guideline development

The 1958 WHO *International Standards for Drinking-water* suggested that concentrations of zinc greater than 15 mg/l would markedly impair the potability of the water. The 1963 and 1971 International Standards retained this value as a maximum allowable or permissible concentration. In the first edition of the *Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality*, published in 1984, a guideline value of 5.0 mg/l was established for zinc, based on taste considerations. The 1993 Guidelines concluded that, taking into account recent studies on humans, the derivation of a guideline value was not required at this time. However, drinking-water containing zinc at levels above 3 mg/l may not be acceptable to consumers. This assessment was brought forward to the third edition of the Guidelines, published in 2004, and the fourth edition of the Guidelines, published in 2011.