Where Does Our Water Come From?
Sources of our water are the South Platte River and its tributaries, the streams that feed Dillon Reservoir and the creeks and canals above the Fraser River. Mountain water is stored in five reservoirs — Antero, Eleven Mile, Cheesman, Dillon and Gross — before it is sent to terminal reservoirs near the three treatment plants in the city.

Mountain Water Sources
Denver’s drinking water comes from rivers, lakes, streams, reservoirs and springs fed by high-quality mountain snow runoff. The water comes entirely from surface sources over a watershed that covers 3,100 square miles on both sides of the Continental Divide. The farthest reaches of this system are more than 105 miles away, and the water is diverted and delivered by gravity to our treatment plants in the city through a complex system of streams, canals and pipes. Prior to treatment, the water flows into three terminal reservoirs where access is limited to further ensure the quality of the water. After treatment, drinking water is fed by both gravity and pumps to a system of underground, clear-water reservoirs and then to your home or business. Some 2,700 miles of pipe carry water to Denver Water customers.

Is There a Presence of Cryptosporidium and Giardia?
Denver Water has tested for Cryptosporidium (Crypto) and Giardia in both raw and treated water since the 1980s. Since that time, Denver Water has never detected a viable indication of either in the treated drinking water.

Crypto and Giardia are microscopic organisms that, when ingested, can cause diarrhea, cramps, fever and other gastro-intestinal symptoms. Crypto and Giardia are usually spread through means other than drinking water. While most people readily recover from the symptoms, Crypto and Giardia can cause more serious illness in people with compromised immune systems. The organisms are in many of Colorado’s rivers and streams and are a result of animal wastes. The presence of these substances in drinking water does not necessarily pose a health risk. Immunocompromised individuals — such as persons who have undergone organ transplants, those with HIV-AIDS or other immune system disorders, and some elderly and infants — can be particularly at risk of infections. These people should seek drinking water advice from their healthcare providers. For more information about contaminants and potential health effects, or to receive a copy of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and microbiological contaminants, call the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

Assessment in the Works
The state health department is in the final stages of completing a source water assessment of the potential for contaminants reaching any of Denver Water’s three terminal reservoirs at Strontia Springs, Marston and Ralston (see map). The report evaluates whether possible contamination could occur. It does not imply that contamination has occurred.

Water Quality Questions?
Call Customer Service at 303-893-2444.
## The Treatment Process

The treatment process consists of five steps:

1. **Coagulation/flocculation** - Raw water from terminal reservoirs is drawn into mixing basins at our treatment plants where we add alum and polymer. This process causes small particles to stick to one another forming larger particles.

2. **Sedimentation** - Over time, the now larger particles become heavy enough to settle to the bottom of a basin from which sediment is removed.

3. **Filteration** - The water is then filtered through layers of fine, granulated materials — either sand, or sand and coal, depending on the treatment plant. As smaller, suspended particles are removed, turbidity diminishes and clear water emerges.

4. **Disinfection** - As protection against any bacteria, viruses and other microbes that might remain, disinfected is added before the water flows into underground reservoirs throughout the distribution system and into your home or business. Denver Water carefully monitors the amount of disinfectant added to maintain quality of the water at the farthest reaches of the system. Fluoride occurs naturally in our water but is also added to treated water.

5. **Corrosion control** - pH is maintained by adding alkali substances to reduce corrosion in the distribution system and the plumbing in your home or business.