**What is fracking?**

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Fracking is the common term for the use of hydraulic fracturing during oil and gas recovery. During a hydraulic fracturing treatment, water and additives are injected into a target reservoir generating one or more fractures that enable oil and gas to flow to the borehole. Since the 1940’s, hydraulic fracturing has been used to increase the production of traditional (typically sandstone) reservoirs with very little controversy. Hydraulic fracturing developments in the 1990’s (specifically horizontal drilling and slickwater) enabled large-scale commercial recovery of oil and gas from tight shale reservoirs. This recovery has led to dramatic decreases in the prices of oil and gas and has made fracking highly controversial. While there are environmental risks associated the recovery and use of any natural resource, it is important to understand the specific environmental risks associated with hydraulic fracturing. Some risks like the generation of earthquakes are misunderstood. Many risks like drinking water contamination can be reduced through proper practices and regulation. While others like large water use are inherent to the process. In all cases, reliable publicly-accessible information and research are necessary for making informed decisions about fracking.

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