

High Sodium Levels in Richmond Water Supply

A Joint Statement from the Municipality of Bayham and Southwestern Public Health

January 29, 2019

Southwestern Public Health and the Municipality of Bayham are advising consumers of the Richmond Community Water system that a recent routine water test indicates a sodium (salt) level of 95.6 mg/L. In accordance with Provincial legislation, the water system operator must notify the local Medical Officer of Health when a sodium (salt) sample result exceeds 20 mg/L.

The aesthetic objective (when it is detectable by taste) for sodium in drinking water is 200 mg/L. For most people, excess sodium (salt) in the diet is not a problem since their kidneys get rid of the excess and it will not result in any apparent health effects. In addition, the average intake of sodium (salt) from water is only a small fraction of that consumed in a normal diet.

One major reason for issuing a Drinking Water Advisory for elevated levels of sodium (salt) is to inform individual suffering from hypertension, or congestive heart failure who may require a sodium-restricted diet, in which case, the intake of sodium (salt) from drinking water could become significant. Consult with your doctor if you are an individual on a sodium (salt) restricted diet for health reasons to determine if you need to adjust your dietary intake based on these levels of sodium in the drinking water.

As part of the water treatment process at the Richmond Water Treatment Plant, water softening is required. These softener systems are like residential systems utilizing private well supplies. As a result of the softening process, elevated sodium levels are to be expected. In accordance with O.Reg.170/03 made under the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Municipality is required to sample every 60 months (5 years) for sodium.

The advisory measure is in place until future tests show that sodium levels have dropped to 20 mg/L or less. Please contact the Environmental Health Department of Southwestern Public Health or the Municipality of Bayham if further information is needed.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joyce Lock
Medical Officer of Health