

URANIUM IN YOUR WELL

Uranium

- is a common naturally occurring and radioactive mineral
- enters local water, air and food supplies through leaching from natural deposits, release in mill tailings, emissions from nuclear industry, dissolution in phosphate fertilizers and combustion of coal and other fuels

Health Effects of Uranium in your Water

- Uranium accumulates in the skeleton and kidneys
- As radium is structurally similar to calcium, the body absorbs it into bones
- Although most ingested uranium is eliminated from the body, a small amount is absorbed and carried through the bloodstream into the kidneys
- elevated levels of uranium in drinking water can increase a person's risk of kidney damage and, over time, can increase a person's lifetime risk of cancer
- if you have been exposed to uranium in your drinking water urine tests and hair analysis can determine the level of uranium in your body

Uranium in your Well

- **The Health Canada maximum acceptable concentration of uranium in drinking water is .02mg/l**
- In areas, such as parts of Haliburton County, where uranium is present in rocks or soil, a drinking-water well can become contaminated with uranium through its release into the well water
- Elevated concentrations of natural uranium in well water are more likely to be found in drilled wells that obtain their water from the cracks and fractures of bedrock, rather than dug wells or surface water supplies



Removing Uranium from your drinking water

- Uranium in drinking water cannot be detected by sight smell or taste. The only way to know uranium concentrations in water is to test for it
- Uranium can be removed from drinking water by several treatment methods
- The two most common methods for homeowners are anion exchange and reverse osmosis. Both require that the treatment device be properly maintained and operated
- Other alternatives include blending in water from other wells to reduce overall concentration or, when feasible, connecting to a public system
- If you find high levels of uranium in your water it is advisable to switch to bottled water until you can install the appropriate water filtration system
- Children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems are at a higher health risk.

Where to Test for Uranium

Contact your local health department for information on testing and for the most current listing of approved laboratories.

In Haliburton County, contact the Haliburton, Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit at 705-457-1391 or visit online at www.hkpr.on.ca