



Sodium in Drinking Water

A Joint Statement from the Elgin Area Water Supply System, the Middlesex-London Health Unit, and Elgin-St. Thomas Public Health

August 8, 2013

The Elgin Area Water Supply System, Elgin St. Thomas Public Health and the Middlesex-London Health Unit are advising that recent routine water quality monitoring has detected slightly elevated sodium levels in the water produced by the Elgin Area Water Supply System. For healthy individuals, the sodium concentrations that have been found do not pose a health risk, however provincial legislation requires water system operators to advise local Medical Officers of Health when a sodium sample result exceeds 20 milligrams per litre (20mg/L). Elgin St. Thomas Public Health and the Middlesex-London Health Unit are therefore advising local physicians of the situation. Patients on sodium restricted diets are being made aware so they can consider all potential sources of sodium, including municipal drinking water.

Elgin Area Water Supply System regularly monitors and tests municipal drinking water quality and as noted above, recently found sodium levels in the treated drinking water has at times exceeded the reporting requirement. Based on sample results in 2013 to date, the average sodium level in the treated drinking water is 19.8mg/L, ranging between 18.8mg/L and 21.2mg/L.

The naturally occurring sodium levels found in Lake Erie can range between 8mg and 14mg per litre. As much as three quarters of the sodium in treated drinking water can come from lake water, with the remainder coming from the water treatment process.

The amount of sodium consumed from drinking water represents a very small percentage of the total amount of sodium consumed by the average person in a day. Most Canadians consume approximately 3400mg of sodium per day, with the main source being processed foods and beverages. At a sodium level of 20mg/L, drinking two litres of water from the Elgin Area Water Supply System each day would contribute about 40mg of sodium to the total daily intake.

The Elgin Area Water Supply System serves the municipalities of Southwold, Central Elgin, Malahide, and Bayham, as well as the Town of Aylmer, the City of St. Thomas and portions of south London. To find out if your municipal drinking water comes from the Elgin Area Water Supply System, please contact your local municipality.



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Comparative Sodium Levels

SOURCE	SODIUM LEVEL
Elgin Area Water Supply System (2013 average)	19.8mg/L
Apple Juice	72mg/L
Bottled Mineral Water (typical)	12mg/L to 1095mg/L
Milk, 1%	452mg/L
Tomato Juice	2760mg/L

SOURCE	SODIUM AMOUNT
Potato Chips (50g)	421mg to 502mg
Processed Cheese (50g)	685mg to 794mg
Ham (cured, cooked) (75g)	621mg to 1125mg
Chicken Noodle Soup (125ml)	622mg

References and Additional Information

Health Canada - Canadian Nutrient File 2011

Dietitians of Canada

<http://www.dietitians.ca/Nutrition-Resources-A-Z/Factsheets/Minerals/Food-Sources-of-Sodium.aspx>

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care

<http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/en/healthy-ontario/healthy-eating/salt.asp>

Health Canada – Nutrient Value of Some Common Foods

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/pdf/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/nvscf-vnqau-eng.pdf

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System

Andrew Henry
Division Manager
519-930-3505 Ext.1355
ahenry@london.ca

Middlesex-London Health Unit

Dan Flaherty
Communications Manager
519-663-5317 Ext. 2469 or 519-617-0570 (cell.)
Dan.Flaherty@mlhu.on.ca

Elgin St. Thomas Public Health

Jim Reffle
Manager, Health Protection Department, Environmental Health & Tobacco Enforcement
519-631-9900 Ext. 1277
jreffle@elginhealth.on.ca