



Lake Huron
Primary Water Supply System

Sodium in Drinking Water Factsheet

December 2020

What is sodium?

Sodium is a naturally occurring mineral in food and water, and is a necessary element of human nutrition. Typically the consumption of sodium from food is much higher than from drinking water.

How does sodium get into the drinking water?

Sodium is a mineral that is naturally occurring in raw water sources. At the Lake Huron Primary Water Supply System (LHPWSS), naturally occurring sodium in Lake Huron contributes approximately one third of the sodium in the drinking water. The naturally occurring sodium level in the lake water is typically 5 mg/L, with the remainder of the sodium in the treated drinking water coming from the water treatment process.

How much sodium is acceptable in drinking water?

The Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality and Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards set an aesthetic objective for sodium in drinking water at 200 mg/L, at which point it can be detected by a salty taste by the average person. A maximum acceptable concentration for sodium in drinking water has not been specified.

Under the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, the Ontario Drinking Water Systems Regulation (Ontario Regulation 170/03) requires that a report be made to the local Medical Officer(s) of Health if a sodium result exceeds 20 mg/L in a sample of drinking water. When a sodium sample result in drinking water exceeds 20 mg/L, the Medical Officer of Health informs physicians and other health professionals to help people following sodium restricted diets control their sodium intake.

How much sodium is in drinking water supplied from the LHPWSS?

Based on 2009-2020 test results, the LHPWSS treated drinking water has an average sodium level of 12.1 mg/L, ranging between 10 mg/L – 14 mg/L. This is consistently well below the regulatory reporting limit.

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How often is sodium testing conducted in the LHPWSS drinking water?

Under the Ontario Drinking Water Systems Regulation (O.Reg. 170/03), drinking water systems are required to test for sodium once every five years. Currently, the LHPWSS tests for sodium once annually. All samples are sent to an external accredited laboratory for analysis. To see the test results for sodium, please visit our water quality reports page at: <https://huronelginwater.ca/consumer-resources/water-quality/>

Will the sodium levels in the LHPWSS affect my health?

The level of sodium in the LHPWSS treated drinking water does not pose a health concern.

If at any time the sodium level exceeds 20 mg/L, the local Medical Officers of Health will be notified.

References and Additional Information

Health Canada – [The Canadian Nutrient File](#)

Dietitians of Canada – [Top 10 Lower Sodium Choices](#)

Health Canada – [Nutrient Value of Some Common Foods](#)

To find out if your drinking water comes from the LHPWSS, please contact your local municipality.

For further information on sodium in drinking water, please contact the Lake Huron Primary Water Supply System at 519-930-3505 or general@huronelginwater.ca

For further information on the health effects of sodium, please contact your local physician or:

Middlesex-London Health Unit
519-663-5317
<https://www.healthunit.com/>

Huron Perth Public Health
1-888-221-2133
<https://www.hpph.ca/en/index.aspx>

Lambton Public Health
519.383.8331
<http://www.lambtonhealth.on.ca/>

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Additional information about the regional water supply system is available at <https://huronelginwater.ca/> and you can follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/RegionalWaterSupply)