

Fluoride in private drinking water



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES

What is Fluoride?

Fluoride is naturally released into groundwater from certain rock types and may also get into the environment through specific industrial manufacturing processes.

Most Canadians are exposed to fluoride daily through:

- Trace amounts found in foods
- Toothpastes and mouthwashes
- Many municipal drinking water supplies*

**The Region of Waterloo does not add fluoride in its municipal water.*

What are the health benefits of fluoride?

Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay or cavities, in children and adults. Please refer to the Canadian Dental Association website below.

What are the health risks of fluoride?

Like many natural substances, fluoride can be harmful in excessive amounts. One of the most noticeable side effects of overexposure to fluoride is dental fluorosis.

What is an acceptable level of fluoride in drinking water?

The maximum acceptable concentration (MAC) for fluoride in drinking water is **1.5mg/L**. Exposure at or below this level will not cause an adverse health effect, taking into consideration all other sources of fluoride exposure. For health effects to result, individuals need to be exposed to fluoride levels that are significantly higher than what the average person or child would be exposed to drinking water that meets the Ontario Drinking Water Standards.

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.

Region of Waterloo Public Health

Health Protection and Investigation
519-575-4400

How do I know if there is fluoride in my well water?

The only way to know if you have fluoride in your well water is to have your well water tested. There is a fee to have your water tested for fluoride.

Please see below for pick up and drop off locations of sample bottles throughout Waterloo Region. You should test your well water for fluoride once a year. Please note it may take up to four weeks for results to be sent to you. Bottles may be picked up any day during regular business hours; however, drop off for samples is on the last Tuesday of every month at the following locations:

Location:

Waterloo: 99 Regina St. South, 1st Floor

Cambridge: 150 Main St., 1st Floor (rear of building)

North Dumfries: 1171 Greenfield Rd.

Wellesley: 4639 Lobsinger Line, Crosshill

Wilmot Township: Castle Kilbride, Baden

Woolwich Township: 24 Church St., Elmira

St. Jacobs: Woolwich Community Health, 10 Parkside Dr.

Linwood: Linwood Vet Clinic, 3860 Manser Rd.

How can I reduce the level of fluoride in my drinking water from my well?

Do not boil your water to get rid of fluoride – boiling will concentrate the fluoride. A private residential drinking water treatment device may be used to reduce naturally occurring fluoride concentrations. Contact a licensed professional as they can advise you on appropriate devices, limitations, as well as maintenance requirements

Additional References:

Health Canada: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/enviro/fluor-eng.php>

Canadian Dental Association: https://www.cda-adc.ca/en/oral_health/faqs/fluoride_faqs.asp