

For Immediate Release
July 21, 2022

WATER QUALITY ADVISORY – MANGANESE IN DRINKING WATER HEALTH ADVISORY – BOTTLE – FED INFANTS

The District of Mackenzie is issuing a Water Quality Advisory (WQA) for the **Gantahaz Subdivision**, due to the levels of manganese in its drinking water supply. A WQA is the lowest-level notification. A WQA is used in situations where the public health threat is modest, and actions can be taken to reduce the risks by ways other than a “boil water notice”.

While the quality of Gantahaz’s drinking water has not changed, the Guideline for Canadian Drinking Water Quality (GCDWG) has. Manganese in the water supply in Gantahaz has been measured at levels of up to 2.26mg/L, which was a one time hit. The average test levels have been 0.129mg/L to 0.145mg/L. The Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guideline for manganese is 0.12mg/L

About Manganese:

Manganese is an essential element (or nutrient) for all living organisms and is present in various kinds of foods as well as some drinking water sources; consuming a small amount of manganese from food or water is needed to stay healthy

- Manganese has long been considered to only be an aesthetic concern in drinking water, causing discoloured water and /or staining of laundry or fixtures.
- However, new research has shown that exposure to high levels of manganese in drinking water poses a greater health risk than previously thought, and that consuming drinking water with high levels of manganese may impact the memory, attention, motor function, and the overall intellectual development of infants.

Out of an abundance of caution Northern health would like water users to be aware of the following:

- An alternate source of water that is below the GCDWQ should be used for preparing infant formula.
- The GCDWQ and the BC Guidance on Manganese in Drinking Water recommends that, water with levels of manganese seen in Gantahaz, not be used to make formula for infants, but can be used for all other purposes including:
 - consumption of water for other community members;
 - use of water for showering, bathing; and
 - other household uses without concern.

The District of Mackenzie tests water regularly in accordance with Provincial requirement and the GCDWQ. Last year sampling for manganese was increased to better assess manganese concentrations prescribed within the GCDWQ. On review of the results, it was determined that a Water Quality Advisory was best suited to inform potentially impacted Gantahaz community members.

The District of Mackenzie is actively working with Northern Health to develop strategies to reduce the concentration of manganese within the distribution system.

For further information contact:

Public Works

250-997-3761

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For those who would like more information, the following links offer more information about manganese in drinking water and the Town's Water Quality Monitoring Program overall:

Health Canada Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality: Guideline Technical Document – Manganese (FAQ) <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/guidelines-canadian-drinking-water-quality-guideline-technical-document-manganese/guidance-document.html>

Ministry of Health – Province of British Columbia HealthLinkBC Health File number 49g:
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/manganese-drinking-water>

Northern Health Authority

<https://www.northernhealth.ca/services/environmental-health/drinking-water>

District of Mackenzie website

<https://districtofmackenzie.ca/public-services/public-works/water-sewers/water>