



May 2015

Dear Residents / Landlords / Tenants:

Re: Elevated Fluoride in the Edson Water Supply

The drinking water provided to your home contains naturally occurring fluoride at levels that may, at times, be greater than the maximum acceptable concentration set by Health Canada: 1.5 mg/L (milligrams per litre) or ppm (parts per million). Annually, we remind Edson residents that you may wish to provide an alternate drinking water source for any children in the household under the age of 8 years, as outlined below.

The Town of Edson continues to upgrade and improve the water system to meet the community's needs and manage the levels of naturally occurring fluoride in the water supply. Alberta Health Services (AHS) works closely with the Town to ensure safe and high quality water is delivered to residents' homes and businesses. Measurements taken between March 2014 and March 2015 show the naturally occurring fluoride levels ranged from 0.47 mg/L to 2 mg/L. These levels depend on several factors including well source, water levels, and the location in the community. The naturally occurring levels of fluoride have, and will continue to fluctuate, so AHS regularly provides health information to ensure you can take appropriate measures for you and your family.

Fluoride occurs naturally in the earth's surface, so all well water, ground water and lakes have some level of fluoride. Small amounts of fluoride, up to 0.7 mg/L, are added to some community water supplies with low levels of naturally occurring fluoride to help to prevent tooth decay and maintain good dental health. However, levels above 1.5 mg/L may cause dental fluorosis.

Mild dental fluorosis looks like white flecks on the teeth and may be difficult to notice. However, teeth with moderate or severe fluorosis have large white patches and may have rough enamel or stains.

Children under 8 years of age who consume greater amounts of fluoride – such as drinking water with more than 1.5 mg/L of fluoride, have a higher risk of developing dental fluorosis. Fluorosis only happens while the teeth are developing under the gum. It means you won't see the problem until adult teeth erupt into the mouth, up to 5 or 6 years after consuming the water with high fluoride level. Once teeth have finished forming and have erupted into the mouth, there is no more risk of dental fluorosis, so older children, and adults need not be concerned.

Please see the Questions and Answers on the back of this letter to help ensure any children living in your household are not consuming greater than recommended amounts of fluoride. If you have questions about your community's water system please contact the Town of Edson: www.edson.ca

If you are a landlord, please share this letter and attached Questions and Answers with your tenants.

Sincerely,

Original signed

Dr. Kathryn Koliaska,
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North Zone MOH - Central

Should my children stop drinking tap water?

Use water with no more than 1.5 mg/L fluoride to mix baby formula or other children's drinks and for drinking and cooking. If you choose bottled water, check the label to make sure it contains no more than 1.5 mg/L fluoride. Another option is to mix tap water with bottled water containing no fluoride, in equal parts to reduce the concentration by 50%.

My children's toothpaste has fluoride in it, should I stop using it?

For children less than 3 years old **and** at risk of tooth decay, use only a grain-of-rice size amount of fluoride toothpaste and brush their teeth for them. Children from age 3 years to 6 years, use up to a **pea-size amount** of fluoride toothpaste; assist with brushing. Teach your children to spit out all the toothpaste and never to eat it. Also, avoid giving fluoride mouth rinse to children younger than 6 years old (risk of swallowing). Most children over 6 years of age can be instructed not to swallow, but parental supervision is still recommended.

Should I go visit my dentist?

Inform your dentist and dental hygienist of your drinking water fluoride content. Maintain regular dental check-ups and preventive fluoride therapies as advised by your dental office or by the AHS school oral health program. Fluoride therapies used properly (gels, foams, and varnishes) do not contribute to the risk of dental fluorosis.

I'm breastfeeding my baby, should I stop drinking tap water?

It is safe for breastfeeding mothers to drink the water since only small amounts of fluoride are transferred in breast milk.

Is it safe to use the water to bathe or wash dishes?

There is no evidence that fluoride is absorbed through the skin, so hand washing, dishwashing and bathing are not concerns.

Can I remove some of the fluoride from the water in my home?

If you want to reduce the level of fluoride in your water, reverse-osmosis, distillation or activated alumina are methods of home-treatment. Consider both installation and maintenance costs. Consult the documentation included with any treatment device to confirm that fluoride is removed and to determine maintenance procedures. Test following installation. NSF certified products are recommended. Pour-through or pitcher-type filters do not remove fluoride.

Need more health information?

- Health Canada: Fluoride and Human Health www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/environ/fluor-eng.php
- You may also contact your local Public Health Inspector.
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/facilities.asp?pid=facility&rid=1000382>