

Elevated Fluoride Levels in Water

- Some areas in Lambton County have high or elevated levels of natural fluoride occurring in the water supply.
- The dental literature indicates that water with fluoride levels around or above **2.0** milligrams per litre (mg/L) or parts per million (ppm), may cause some dental “fluorosis” to occur.
- When fluoride levels are above **1.5** mg/L the Ministry of the Environment recommends raising public awareness and educating the public about how to control excessive exposure.
- The possible effect of the elevated fluoride level in the drinking water is most likely limited to the teeth and is cosmetic in nature. The effect on the appearance of teeth may vary from small white flecks to larger white areas and, at higher fluoride levels, to pitting or brown areas.
- This condition is referred to as dental fluorosis. However, it is difficult to predict if fluorosis will occur and what it will look like. Fluorosis occurs while the tooth is forming below the gums (usually during ages 0-6 years), not after the tooth erupts into the mouth.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of any homeowner with a private water supply to ascertain the water quality including fluoride levels.

FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE

It is currently felt that many of the “white” spots on teeth may be the result of young children “eating” or swallowing fluoride toothpaste. See the [Fluoride/Non Fluoride Toothpaste Recommendations](#) site/pamphlet.

Recommendations if the fluoride content of drinking water exceeds 1.5 mg/L:

(For persons who may be concerned with dental fluorosis)

The individual should consider purchasing a home treatment system to remove or reduce the fluoride content if there are young children consuming water.

Only the reverse osmosis and distillation process removes fluoride. Contact “Water Companies” in the yellow pages for the costs of these processes. The Brita water filters do not remove fluoride.

If purchasing a home treatment system is not possible, consider the use of water from another source with a lower fluoride level (e.g. non fluoridated, bottled water) for drinking, cooking, mixing juices or making baby formula, especially when there are young children at home.

For children under 7 years of age, and particularly for children who may swallow toothpaste, a parent should consider the use of non-fluoride toothpaste or no toothpaste.

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT

160 Exmouth Street
Point Edward, Ontario N7T 7Z6
Telephone: 519 383-8331
Toll free: 1-800-667-1839
Fax: 519 383-6078
Email: chsd@county-lambton.on.ca
www.lambtonhealth.on.ca

Only small amounts (pea size or a smear) of toothpaste should ever be used. Parents should dispense the toothpaste.

Children's Services Department DOES NOT recommend the use of fluoride supplements. They should NOT be used in areas with elevated fluoride levels.

A fluoride treatment at the dentist should have very minimal chances of contributing to fluorosis; however the parent may wish to discuss this with the dentist.

FLUORIDE WATER TEST

In August 2004, the Health Units in Ontario were advised by the Director, Public Health Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, that the Central Public Health Laboratory would discontinue chemical testing for nitrates, nitrites and fluoride. This service had been provided, at no charge, to the Health Units.

As a result of this decision, all persons who wish to have their water supply tested for fluoride, nitrites or nitrates will now have to pay for this service. A sample bottle must be obtained and taken to a private, accredited laboratory. The public may access any accredited laboratory they wish, however, the Children's Services Department, County Lambton, identify one London based laboratory and one laboratory in Waterloo as providing this service. We strongly suggest that persons contact the laboratories by phone before visiting to determine the cost and the steps involved in providing a water sample.

SGS Lakefield Research Ltd.,
202-746 Baseline Rd., (near Wellington Rd.)
London, ON N6C 5Z2
Toll Free: 1-877-848-8060
Telephone: (519) 672-4500
Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

A sample bottle must be picked up at the office. Payment must be paid when the filled bottle is returned. Sample bottles may be shipped to a residence; however, there is a shipping charge of \$10.00.

The minimum charge is \$50.00 + GST = \$53.50. Payment is to be cash or credit card. Fluoride, nitrates and nitrites can be done for this amount.

Enviro-Test Laboratories
60 Northland Road
Waterloo, ON N2V 2B8
Toll Free: 1-800-668-9878
Telephone: (519) 886-6910

Contact the above for their water sample container (100 ml glass). The container will be sent them, including a "Chain of Custody Form" that must be completed. When a person returns the form, they must indicate the test they wish.

Fluoride test: Approximately \$25.00
Nitrate & nitrites test: Approximately \$40.00

Payment must be included when the sample is submitted.

For more information contact your dentist or call the dental staff at the Children's Services Department
383-8331, ext. 3531.