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DRINKING WATER NOTICE

Important Information about Copper in Your Drinking Water

The City of Hopkins has found elevated levels of copper in drinking water in some homes/buildings. The water the City of Hopkins supplies to its customers does not have high levels of copper. Sometimes, copper from a building's or home's pipes and plumbing can make its way into the water in those buildings.

Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce copper in your drinking water.

Elevated Levels of Copper in Your Drinking Water

Our Water Department regularly samples our drinking water for many substances, including copper, to make sure it meets Safe Drinking Water Act standards. Since 2003, our testing has consistently shown copper levels below the Safe Drinking Water Act action level. This allowed us to be on a three year testing cycle for copper.

We've recently received the results of our June 2019 water testing. The results showed that more than 10 percent of the homes (six homes) tested for copper were above the action level. The action level for copper is 1,300 micrograms per liter (the same as 1,300 parts per billion, or ppb). These latest water test results were out of the ordinary and likely caused by changes at our water treatment plant. Just before we did the June water tests we had adjusted our disinfection program and changed the pump for our corrosion control treatment.

Subsequently, we did follow-up water testing in early October 2019 which showed reduced copper levels. This supports the idea that the original tests were out of the ordinary. We have received results from four of the six locations that previously had copper levels above the 1,300 ppb action level. These latest test results show reduced copper levels. Just one of the four samples slightly exceeded the 1,300 ppb action level.

What We Are Doing about the Issue

As described above, the high copper test results were out of the ordinary. Re-testing supports this. We are working closely with the Minnesota Department of Health and our water system engineering consultant to further check this idea. We are looking closely at our corrosion control treatment to determine if a slight adjustment may help further reduce copper concentrations in homes and buildings. We are also adopting a copper education program for all of our water customers.

Our drinking water treatment program has been effective at keeping Hopkins water within all Safe Drinking Water Act standards, including copper, for many years. We are confident that we will identify any adjustments needed to eliminate elevated copper levels. Following Minnesota Department of Health requirements, we will be doing copper testing again during January-June 2020 and June-December 2020. When the City receives those test results, they will be posted on the City's website.

What Are the Health Effects of Copper?

Your body needs some copper to stay healthy, but too much is harmful. Eating or drinking too much copper can cause vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea, liver damage, and kidney disease. The level of copper that will cause symptoms varies from person to person. Nausea and diarrhea may occur when copper levels are approximately 3,000 ppb. Most people's bodies are able to maintain the right level of copper. People with Wilson's Disease and some infants (babies under one year old) are sensitive to copper. Their bodies are not able to get rid of extra copper easily.

Sources of Copper

Copper is a reddish metal that occurs naturally in rock, soil, water, sediment, and air. It is used to make many products, including parts for plumbing systems.

Copper can get into your drinking water as the water passes through your household plumbing system. Over time, plumbing parts usually build up a natural coating that keeps the water from absorbing copper from the plumbing.

Water may have more copper if:

- Your plumbing is less than three years old. It likely has not had time to build up a protective coating.
- It has been sitting in your home's pipes. The water has had more time to absorb copper from the plumbing.
- You use warm or hot water. Warmer water absorbs more copper from plumbing systems.
- You have a home water softener. There may be less protective coating in homes with softened water.

Reducing Exposure to Copper in Water

1. **Let the water run** before using it for drinking or cooking. If you have a lead service line, let the water run for 3-5 minutes. If you do not have a lead service line, let the water run for 30-60 seconds.
    - Ways to let the water run before using it for drinking or cooking:
        - Do household tasks like showering or running the dishwasher first
        - Collect tap water for cleaning or watering plants
    - Make sure you let the water run from individual faucets for a short time before using them for drinking or cooking.
    - Consider keeping a container of drinking water in the refrigerator to reduce how often you need to let the water run.
2. **Use cold water** for drinking, making food, and making baby formula. Hot water releases more copper from pipes than cold water.
3. **Test your water**. In most cases, letting the water run and using cold water for drinking and cooking should keep copper levels low in your drinking water. If you are still concerned about copper, arrange with a laboratory to test your tap water.
    - Testing your water is important if an infant or someone with Wilson's disease drinks your tap water.
    - Search for Accredited Laboratories (https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam) to purchase a sample container and get instructions on how to submit a sample.
4. If tests show you have levels of copper over 1,300 ppb in your tap water after you let the water run 30-60 seconds, you may want to consider treating your water.
    - If you use a home water softener, ensure that your softener settings are correct. Some home treatments can increase copper levels in water.
    - You can learn more about water treatment options at Home Water Treatment (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html).

For More Information

If you have questions about copper in drinking water, please call Hopkins Public Works at: 952-939-1382.

Visit our website at: www.hopkinsmn.com/500/Water-Quality

Visit the Minnesota Department of Health's Copper in Drinking Water (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/copper.html).

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This notice is being sent to you by the City of Hopkins.