



Renfrew County and District Health Unit  
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"



## For Immediate Release

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(Pembroke, Ontario, March 14, 2024)

### **Sodium Levels in Haley and Beachburg Municipal Drinking Water Systems**

Together, Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) and the Township of Whitewater Region are providing additional information to users of the Haley and Beachburg Drinking Water System (DWS) on a report of increased sodium (salt) in the municipal drinking water that was recently communicated to physicians and residents.

There is no maximum acceptable concentration of sodium in drinking water, because it is not a toxic element. However, local health units are advised by drinking water system owners and/or operating authorities when levels exceed 20 mg/L. Sodium levels of 24.7 mg/L were reported in the Beachburg DWS and 65.5 mg/L in Haley DWS. For most people, sodium in drinking water is not a concern, but increased levels may have an impact on individuals who have:

- severe high blood pressure
- congestive heart failure
- a sodium restricted diet

It is recommended that these individuals consult with their health care provider if increased sodium in their drinking water is a health concern.

RCDHU notes the following additional background on sodium in drinking water:

- Sodium is the same element that makes up table salt, in the form of sodium chloride.
- Sodium is tested in public water systems every 5 years.
- While there is no maximum acceptable concentration for sodium in drinking water, the aesthetic objective (i.e., non-health related) is to keep levels below 200 mg/L so that it does not affect the water's taste.
- The highest sodium level found in the Haley DWS, 65.5 mg/L, would result in approximately an additional 130 mg of sodium consumed per day for adults, or only 4 to 5% of usual daily consumption (most of which is through food).
- It is not uncommon for sodium levels similar to those found in Whitewater Region's Drinking Water Systems to be found in other drinking water systems across Canada. Sodium in drinking water is often naturally occurring or can be the result of road salt application.

The sodium levels in the Haley and Beachburg Drinking Water Systems were initially reported on January 19<sup>th</sup> to RCDHU by the Township's municipal water system operator, Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA). There was an inadvertent delay in addressing the reports. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, as per local processes, RCDHU communicated the sodium results to local physicians and advised the Township's municipal water system operator, OCWA, to inform the users of these drinking water systems of the increased sodium, in partnership with RCDHU. RCDHU is reviewing its processes in collaboration with other involved agencies to improve communication of this information to residents in a timely manner and regrets the delay in notifying residents.

For more information on water system testing, please visit RCDHU's [Safe Water](#) webpage.

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