

**Joint release from:
Peterborough Utilities Group &
Peterborough County-City Health Unit**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Residents Advised of Upcoming Maintenance of Disinfection Tank at Peterborough Water Treatment Plant

Thursday, November 18, 2010, Peterborough

Local residents are advised that commencing Tuesday, November 23, 2010 the Peterborough Utilities will carry out preventative maintenance on a disinfection tank at the Peterborough Water Treatment Plant.

This tank will be taken out of service for a period of approximately two weeks. During this period, the process of disinfection will be changed and is expected to increase some disinfection by-products over the two week period. Peterborough Utilities will notify the public with a follow-up press release when this work is completed.

Chlorinated disinfection by-products (DBPs) can form when the chlorine used to disinfect drinking water reacts with naturally occurring organic matter (e.g., decaying leaves and vegetation). In the City of Peterborough, the concentrations of DBPs in drinking water are normally reduced at the treatment plant by removing the organic matter from the water before chlorine is added.

However for the next two weeks, during routine plant maintenance, it is expected that levels of disinfection by-products will be temporarily increased.

Current evidence is that DBPs do not pose an immediate health risk. Studies suggest that very long term exposure (e.g. 35 years) may be linked to a slightly increased risk of some types of cancer. In addition, some studies suggest exposure to DBPs in drinking water may be associated with human reproductive and developmental problems.

It is expected that levels of trihalomethanes, one of the major groups of DBPs, could reach 120 parts per billion during this two week period. The Ontario Drinking Water Standard for trihalomethanes is 100 parts per billion, averaged over a year. Peterborough's average for 2010 is 84 parts per billion, so even after the elevated levels during this two week period are included, Peterborough's water should still be within this standard.

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Several options are available to residents concerned about elevated levels of DBPs in their drinking water during this two week period. These are:

- Use a water treatment device that uses activated carbon to treat the water (such as a pitcher with a carbon filter designed to remove disinfection by-products).
- Use bottled water.
- **DO NOT** treat the water by boiling it as this will increase the levels of some DBPs in the water.

Chlorination continues to be the best choice to treat drinking water. The use of chlorine has virtually eliminated waterborne microbial diseases, because of its ability to kill or inactivate essentially all waterborne viruses and bacteria. The benefits of chlorinating drinking water are considered much greater than the risk of health effects from DBPs. For more information, please visit the Peterborough County-City Health Unit's website at www.pcchu.ca.

For further information, please visit the following links:

Trihalomethane (THM)

<http://www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater/158462.pdf>

Haloacetic Acid

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/water/haloaceticacid.asp>

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