

DRINKING WATER

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does our water come from?

The City of St. Catharines gets its drinking water from the Decew Water Treatment Plant operated by the Regional Municipality of Niagara. The source of water for this plant is surface water, from Lake Erie via an intake from the Welland Canal located approximately 6 km from the treatment plant near Allanburg. The water is diverted to Decew's own 5.4 km long supply channel which flows by gravity directly to the treatment plant. The Decew Water Treatment Plant is a full treatment plant providing screening, chemical-assisted flocculation, coagulation, filtration and disinfection using chlorine.

Why is my water sometimes brown?

If rusty or coloured water is noticeable in your cold water, it may be coming from the watermain. Various maintenance procedures in our distribution system require flushing of the water mains. Rust can form on the inside walls of cast iron watermains over time. Running your cold water tap long enough for the colour to disappear should be sufficient to flush out the service line from the watermain to your house. Please note that there is no known health risk associated with this physical characteristic. If this problem is noticeable in your hot water, your water heater may be rusting and should be serviced.

Why does my water taste and smell like chlorine?

Chlorine is added as a disinfectant. It quickly disappears from water on its own. However, you can easily remove the taste and smell of chlorine residual in drinking water through several methods. Many people find that storing tap water in the refrigerator in a glass container will remove the taste of chlorine. Another alternative is to use a store-bought carbon filter pitcher. Or you can install a carbon filter on your tap to remove chlorine.

Are there any health risks associated with chlorine?

No, there are no known health risks associated with the small quantities of chlorine in the drinking water. Chlorine is the most common disinfectant used and levels in the City's drinking water are well within Ontario's Safe Drinking Water Act's guidelines.

How often is the drinking water tested?

The drinking water is sampled on a daily basis throughout the City to ensure its safety and compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Almost 3000 drinking water samples are taken every year throughout the City.

Why is my water cloudy when I first turn the tap on?

Cloudy water is usually caused by tiny air bubbles in the water. After awhile, the bubbles rise to the top and disappear. This type of cloudiness occurs more often in the winter, when the drinking water is cold. Another cause of cloudiness in cold water comes from calcium. Calcium is naturally occurring in our drinking water and usually settles to the bottom. Although the water may look unappealing, it is perfectly safe to drink.

Who do I contact if I have any questions or concerns regarding water quality?

You may contact Stephanie Wybrew, Senior Water Quality Technician, Environmental Services at (905) 688-5600 ext. 2197 or swybrew@stcatharines.ca.



City of St. Catharines

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

