

URANIUM IN YOUR WATER?

Protecting yourself when there is Uranium in your water.

Uranium is a natural mineral found in soil and bedrock. Human activities, like manufacturing, can release uranium into the water. Uranium can also leave the soil or rocks and enter the water. Once uranium enters the surface water, it can travel large distances.

Those who rely on private wells are at a greater risk of exposure to uranium in their drinking water. This is most likely to occur when wells are drilled into bedrock containing uranium. Granite rock has the highest uranium concentrations



The type of uranium that is found in water is not radioactive.

It is easier for the type of uranium found in water to enter the bloodstream than other kinds of uranium.

How can I be exposed?

There are many ways that people can be exposed to uranium:

- Drinking water that is contaminated with uranium
- Skin contact with water that contains uranium (very low risk)
- Eating unwashed root vegetables grown in soil contaminated with uranium



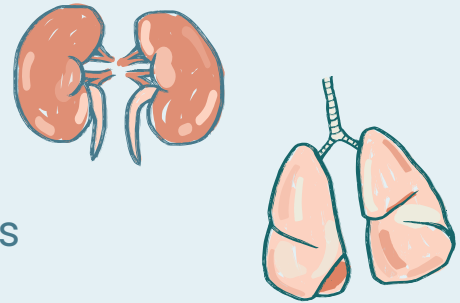
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What are the health impacts?

The health impacts of uranium in water depend on the concentration and duration of exposure. Impacts of very high exposure to uranium include:

- Increased risk of heart disease
- Kidney problems
- Increased risk of high blood pressure
- Lung cancer at very high exposure levels



Water Testing

Water testing should be done by a commercial laboratory. Different water tests look for different contaminants. Uranium is usually not included on a standard water test. It needs to be asked for in addition to other tests. More detailed tests may cost more money.

How to reduce exposure

There are many things you can do to protect yourself from uranium

- Know if you live in an area with high levels of uranium in the ground
- Use bottled water if there are high levels of uranium in your water
- If you are able, use reverse osmosis treatment targeted towards your kitchen sink



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What are the guidelines?

The MCL is an enforceable standard set by the EPA that limits the amount of a contaminant that can be present in a public water system. These guidelines are used to keep consumers safe. The EPA and MassDEP have set an MCL for Uranium which can be found on our website.

Resources

- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Uranium Public Health Statement. 2024.
 - <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/PHS/PHS.aspx?phsid=438&toxid=77>
- Water Quality Association. Uranium Factsheet. 2013.
 - https://wqa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2014_Uranium.pdf
- MassDEP. Arsenic & Uranium Bedrock Well Study: Arsenic & Uranium FAQs. 2009.
 - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/arsenic-uranium-bedrock-well-study-arsenic-uranium-faqs>



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