



Ipswich Water Department

272 High Street
P.O. Box 151
Ipswich, MA 01938

November 18, 2013

Drinking Water Advisory - Important information about manganese in your drinking water

Manganese is an essential nutrient that is part of a healthy diet. Drinking water may naturally contain manganese and, when concentrations are greater than 50 micrograms per Liter (ug/L or ppb), the water may be discolored and taste bad. Over a lifetime, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that people drink water with manganese levels less than 300 ug/L and over the short term, EPA recommends that people limit their consumption of water with levels over 1,000 ug/L primarily due to concerns about possible neurological effects. Children up to 1 year of age should not be given water with manganese over 300 ug/L nor should formula for infants be made with that water for longer than 10 days.

Two of our six water sources have exceeded the 300 ug/L manganese threshold within the last year. The most recent test results show Browns Well, our source located on High Street, contains 1,110 ug/L of manganese. Browns Well is currently shut down and the Water Department is evaluating long term options for this well. The most recent test results for Fellows Road Well, our source located off Fellows Road, contains 525 ug/L. The four other sources contain manganese levels significantly below the 300 ug/L threshold. With the ability to operate a combination of our six sources, the water consumed in many areas is a blend of the various sources that are operating at that time.

What should you do? What does this mean?

- Manganese is generally not harmful. *However, infant formula should be prepared with bottled water or formula should be made with water from an alternative source with manganese levels below 300 ug/L or as low as possible.*
- **Do not boil the water.** Boiling, freezing, filtering or letting the water stand does not reduce the manganese levels. Excessive boiling can make the manganese more concentrated, because manganese remains behind when the water evaporates.
- **Children, one year of age or younger, should use bottled water or water from an alternative source with a manganese level below 300 ug/l.**
- If you have health related questions on manganese see the fact sheet or contact your health care provider.

What is being done? What is the next step?

The Town has hired an engineering consultant to identify possible long term solutions at these two sources (Browns and Fellows Roads Wells) for manganese reduction and to prepare capital and operating cost estimates. Once the engineering report is complete, the Board of Water Commissioners will review the options and decide what course of action to pursue.

What has changed? Why am I receiving this notice now?

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has completed their review of the USEPA Manganese Health Advisory and several studies that raised concerns about health effects caused by elevated manganese levels in drinking water. Information about these concerns has appeared in our annual water quality report since 2011. Based on these studies, MassDEP has concluded that additional steps are needed to protect public health. This notice is the first step in a process that will ultimately require reductions in source water manganese levels.

MassDEP will require communities to comply with enhanced notification requirements for the next round of sampling in 2014 (Ipswich has been reporting manganese levels in its Consumer Confidence Reports). **In an effort to keep our customers informed, the Town is choosing to be proactive in providing information about the sampling results as well as the important steps we are taking to identify and implement solutions.**

Where can I get more information?

We will continue to monitor manganese levels and work with MassDEP to keep you informed of all current information on this issue. For more information on manganese please see the attached fact sheet or visit MassDEP's website

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/manganese-in-drinking-water.html>

Drought conditions exist.

The lack of significant precipitation this fall has led to drought conditions. Sound water use practices reduce the amount of stress we place on our resources. Please use drinking water wisely and conserve.

If you have any questions for our Water Department please call (978) 356-6635 or by mail at P.O. Box 151, Ipswich, MA 01938.

Please share this information with all other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand, mail or email. An electronic copy of this notice is available on our website (www.ipswichutilities.org).

This advisory is being sent to you by the Ipswich Water Department

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