

Is there *Uranium* in your drinking water?

How it can affect you and your family.

What is uranium and why is it dangerous?

Uranium is a radioactive substance that is found in nature. It can be found in the air, soil, food, and water. The amount of uranium in your environment can be increased by industrial activity, such as local mines or mills.

While a very small amount of natural uranium in your environment is okay, higher levels of uranium can be ***harmful to your health.***



How can uranium affect me?

The most common ways for uranium to enter your body are through your food and drinking water. Uranium exposure can damage your kidneys. Kidneys help you stay healthy by:

- ❖ Removing waste from your blood,
- ❖ Making red blood cells,
- ❖ Controlling your blood pressure, and
- ❖ Keeping your bones healthy.

Over time, damage to your kidneys can lead to organ failure, which can be dangerous, even life-threatening.

What can I do about it?

Consider testing your water: You can take a water sample from your tap and send it to a lab for testing. Because levels change over time, you should test your water every 3 years. The NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) provides a list of companies that offer water testing:

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/nhelap/documents/labs-private-wells.pdf>

What to do if high levels of uranium are found: If you are concerned, a short-term option is to drink bottled water. You can also install a treatment system to make sure your water is safe, long term. Uranium treatment systems will also protect against some other dangerous substances. The most important spot to treat is any faucet that supplies drinking water. You will need to consider factors such as other contaminants that may be in your water, water usage, and cost. A water treatment expert can help you make the right decision for you and your family. The NH DES also provides a fact sheet about water treatment system options: <http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/dwgb/documents/dwgb-3-2.pdf>

For more information on well water testing in New Hampshire, please contact the NH Public Health Lab:

29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-4661

<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/lab/biomonitoring.htm>

