



For Immediate Release

Update on the Cobden Drinking Water System (August 21, 2026)

The Township of Whitewater Region and Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) are advising users of the Cobden Drinking Water System about elevated manganese levels in the municipal drinking water supply. Manganese levels have varied over the past two weeks. On August 21, 2026, the treated water result was 0.18 mg/L, above Health Canada's 0.12 mg/L guideline.

Important advice for drinking water users (infants 12 months of age and younger)

Until manganese levels return to 0.12 mg/L or lower and RCDHU advises otherwise, **infants 12 months of age and younger** should not consume water from the Cobden Drinking Water System.

Use bottled water or another safe source of drinking water for infant formula, drinking, food preparation and other foods or drinks for infants.

Do not boil the tap water. Boiling does not remove manganese and may increase its concentration.

Health Impacts

Infants are more sensitive to manganese than older children and adults. Long-term exposure to elevated manganese may affect an infant's developing nervous system. Older children and adults, including pregnant people, are at lower risk.

RCDHU is continuing to monitor the situation. For more information about manganese and health, visit RCDHU at <https://www.rcdhu.com/healthy-living/safe-water/>

What are OCWA and the Township doing to lower manganese levels?

OCWA's Process Optimization Team is on-site at the Cobden water treatment plant to help reduce manganese levels through optimization of the treatment system. OCWA is continually making fine adjustments to the treatment process to ensure the filters are operating as effectively as possible at removing manganese.

OCWA is investigating many short- and long-term solutions, including new technology and treatment processes that can remove manganese more effectively. One such investigation occurred this morning when a team of specialist divers inspected the Cobden WTP's raw water inlet pipe, that provides water to the Cobden Water Treatment Plant from Muskrat Lake. Divers were looking for any signs of damage or conditions that could be contributing to the elevated manganese levels that are being observed.

If you notice coloured water from your taps, run cold water until it clears. If the water does not clear after one hour of flushing, please contact the Township at (613) 646-2282 or submit a report on the Township's website under 'Feedback'. After hours reports can be submitted online or by calling the Townships after-hours reporting line at 613-647-3333.

Additional Information:

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