

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT SELF-SUPPLY DRINKING WATER SOURCED FROM GROUNDWATER

Tests show some private bores with higher levels of arsenic

Hawke's Bay Regional Council is advising bore owners, who use this water for drinking water (potable supply), to test it for arsenic after becoming aware of higher arsenic levels in groundwater at three Hawke's Bay locations.

Some higher levels of arsenic have been recorded in groundwater at three Hawke's Bay locations, where concentrations are greater than the Maximum Acceptable Value (MAV) of 0.01 milligrams per litre (mg/L) of water (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand 2005 (Revised 2008) – DWSNZ). Long term consumption of water with arsenic greater than the MAV can cause adverse health effects, including increased risk of cancer.

Most testing of the groundwater by the Regional Council and Napier City and Hastings District Councils has not found any issue with arsenic levels in groundwater. However the Regional Council encourages anyone with their own bores to have them tested, to be sure that arsenic levels are within safe limits.

This situation is not unique to Hawke's Bay and occurs in other sediment dominant groundwater systems around New Zealand (Waikato, Manawatu, Marlborough, Canterbury) and worldwide.

Information on water sampling is available from laboratories who can perform analysis. Suggested laboratories include Hill Laboratories – Hamilton 0508 44 555 22; Analytical Research Laboratories – Napier 06 835 9222 and Water Testing Hawke's Bay – Hastings 06 870 6449.

Owners of private bores used for potable water are responsible for maintaining, monitoring and treating their own supply. Water is considered safe to drink if it meets limits set for certain materials in the DWSNZ. Anyone who has recently tested their self-supply water quality will not have tested for arsenic unless this was specified.

People wanting health advice or who have specific health concerns should talk to their GP. For information on what test results might mean in terms of risk to health, call the on-call Health Protection Officer on 06 878 8109.

More information at:

hbrc.govt.nz, search: #arsenic

health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/environmental-health/hazardous-substances/arsenic-and-health