

## **THE FACTS ON SODIUM IN DRINKING WATER**

### **What is it?**

- Sodium is a mineral.
- Sodium regulates the balance of water in cells, keeps nerves functioning and helps to maintain blood volume.

### **How does sodium get into drinking water?**

- Sodium can get into drinking water from road salt, water softener backwash and from natural salt deposits in ground water.
- High sodium levels can also be due to water treatment procedures. Chemicals for disinfection and treatment of municipal water can contain small amounts of sodium adding to natural amounts found in the untreated water.

### **What is the drinking water objective for sodium?**

- The aesthetic objective for sodium in drinking water is 200 mg/L. This can be detected by a salty taste in the water.
- The Medical Officer of Health is to be notified when sodium levels in drinking water exceed 20 mg/L in provincially regulated communal water systems.

### **What are the human health effects of sodium?**

- People who suffer from congestive heart disease or hypertension may require a sodium restricted diet. Therefore, the intake of sodium from drinking water may become significant. Any person having concerns should consult their primary health care provider.

### **What are the solutions?**

- People using domestic water softeners can significantly increase their daily intake of sodium by drinking the treated water and consuming foods cooked in the treated water.
- It is recommended that a separate water supply that is not softened be used for drinking and cooking.
- Use low sodium bottled water for drinking and cooking purposes.
- Sodium can be removed from drinking water by the use of treatment systems such as distillation or reverse osmosis.

For more information, call (705) 474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808; ask for the Desk Duty Inspector.