

On May 1
the water
in your tap
is going
to change.



Since 1996 the Town of Ponoka has been working to develop a new, sustainable source of water capable of supplying the future needs of our community: a 62-kilometre regional pipeline to deliver treated Red Deer River water purchased from the City of Red Deer.

On Monday, May 1 this pipeline will become operational, and Ponoka residents will convert to the new water supply. Switching from an underground aquifer to the new surface water source will mean some changes in the water flowing from your household faucets.

What is changing?

The new pipeline will provide water with greatly reduced alkaline and sodium levels. Water hardness will increase, although not so much that household plumbing would be affected or that water softeners are necessary.

The City of Red Deer uses a different disinfection method, called chloramination (adding chlorine plus ammonia), than the chlorine-only process used by the Town of Ponoka. Chloramination is a safe, proven water disinfection process that has been widely used in communities across Canada, the United States and Europe.

What does "water hardness" mean?

Water is considered to be "hard" or "soft" according to the amount of dissolved minerals, most commonly calcium and magnesium, that it contains.

Water delivered through the new regional pipeline will be somewhat harder than the well water that Ponoka residents are accustomed to. However, this new water supply will not be hard enough to cause the formation of lime scale deposits in household plumbing and appliances, or to require the use of water-softening equipment.

What is chloramination?

Chloramination involves the use of both chlorine and ammonia to disinfect drinking water. When mixed in a reservoir,

they combine chemically to form chloramines, which destroy harmful bacteria and organisms but leave water safe for drinking and all household uses.

Chloramination is a better choice than using chlorine alone because it lasts longer in the water distribution system, providing greater protection against bacteria.

Is chloraminated water safe?

Chloraminated water is safe for drinking by people and animals, cooking, bathing, laundry, gardening and all other household uses. It can be used safely by women who are pregnant, for mixing baby formula and for cleansing of cuts.

However, just like chlorine, precautions must be taken to neutralize or remove chloramines by these special groups:

- **Kidney dialysis patients**
- **Owners of aquariums or backyard fish ponds**
- **Restaurants & supermarkets with seafood tanks**
- **Businesses requiring high-purity water**

Why is chloramine harmful to dialysis patients?

Like chlorine, chloramines can harm kidney dialysis patients if it is not removed from water before it comes into contact with their bloodstream, where it inhibits the ability of their red blood cells to carry oxygen. All dialysis patients can freely drink or bathe in chloraminated water because the body's digestive process neutralizes chloramines.

Patients who perform dialysis at home must check with their health care provider to ensure their own equipment has been properly adapted for use with chloraminated water. If you are a dialysis patient and have any questions, please call your doctor or the dialysis centre where you are treated.

Why is chloramine harmful in aquariums?

Because fish pass water through their gills directly into their bloodstream, chloramine will inhibit the ability of their red blood cells to carry oxygen.

Chloramine can be removed from aquarium water or ponds only by using inexpensive water-conditioning agents or an activated carbon filtration system. These products are readily available at pet stores. Chloramine will not dissipate through boiling or allowing water to sit exposed to the air.

For more information about chloramination and changes to Ponoka's water supply, call the Town of Ponoka Office at 783-4431.