

DRINKING WATER NOTICE

Important Information about Copper in Your Drinking Water

Updated 9/28/2026

The City of Ellendale has found elevated levels of copper in drinking water in 2 of 10 homes/buildings, sampled.

Elevated Levels of Copper in Drinking Water

Our water system regularly samples for copper in our drinking water to make sure it meets Safe Drinking Water Act standards. More than 10 percent of the homes sampled for copper (2 of 10 samples taken), were above the Safe Drinking Water Act action level for copper. The action level for copper is 1,300 micrograms per liter (ug/L. The same as 1,300 parts per billion, or ppb).

Results of the 10 samples taken in August, 2026.

The 90th percentile copper level = 1630 µg/L (rounded as 1.630 mg/L). The action level for copper is 1300 µg/L. 2 of 10 homes/buildings sampled exceeded the limit of the action level for copper of 1,300 µg/L. See the attached List of the individual results of the 10 sampled sites.

What Are We Doing about the Issue?

The City took samples from our 2 wells, on September 15, 2026. The samples were taken from the wells prior to water treatment. The results showed 1.24 ug/L for well #3 and 5.17 ug/L for well #4. Both well results are well below the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act requirements action level for copper is 1,300 µg/L. As a result of this testing, it was determined the City well water system did not contribute to the high copper levels of the 2 homes that exceeded the threshold.

What does this mean for the City's water system users and what is the City doing?

While the City water well water system did not contribute to the high copper levels of the 2 homes, other locations may have higher levels that we are unaware of. The City will continue to draw samples from other locations annually, to test for lead & copper levels. We will work with the MN Dept. of Health and review our sample site plan to increase the number of sample locations and try to determine which locations are more at risk of elevated lead or copper levels.

What can the residents to do learn about copper?

If you are concerned about the possibility of elevated copper in your water, please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce copper in your drinking water.

We are making available the link to the MNDH website that contains copper education material for you to access. We also have this information available to print hard copies for those who wish to stop by the Clerk's office to obtain copies.

What Are the Health Effects of Copper?

Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage. People with Wilson's disease should consult their personal doctor.

Sources of Copper

Copper is a reddish metal that occurs naturally in rock, soil, water, sediment, and air. It is used to make many products, including parts for plumbing systems.

Copper can get into your drinking water as the water passes through your household plumbing system. Over time, plumbing parts usually build up a natural coating that keeps the water from absorbing copper from the plumbing.

Water may have more copper if:

- Your plumbing is less than three years old. It likely has not had time to build up a protective coating.
- It has been sitting in your home's pipes. The water has had more time to absorb copper from the plumbing.
- You use warm or hot water. Warmer water absorbs more copper from plumbing systems.
- You have a home water softener. There may be less protective coating in homes with softened water.

Reducing Exposure to Copper in Water

1. **Let the water run** before using it for drinking or cooking. If you have a lead service line, let the water run for 3-5 minutes. If you do not have a lead service line, let the water run for 30-60 seconds.
 - Ways to let the water run before using it for drinking or cooking:
 - Do household tasks like showering or running the dishwasher first
 - Collect tap water for cleaning or watering plants
 - Make sure you let the water run from individual faucets for a short time before using them for drinking or cooking.
 - Consider keeping a container of drinking water in the refrigerator to reduce how often you need to let the water run.
2. **Use cold water** for drinking, making food, and making baby formula. Hot water releases more copper from pipes than cold water.
3. **Test your water.** In most cases, letting the water run and using cold water for drinking and cooking should keep copper levels low in your drinking water. If you are still concerned about copper, arrange with a laboratory to test your tap water.
 - Testing your water is important if an infant or someone with Wilson's disease drinks your tap water.
 - [Search for Accredited Laboratories](https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam) (<https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam>) to purchase a sample container and get instructions on how to submit a sample.
4. If tests show you have levels of copper over 1,300 ppb in your tap water after you let the water run 30-60 seconds, you may want to consider treating your water.
 - If you use a home water softener, ensure that your softener settings are correct. Some home treatments can increase copper levels in water.
 - You can learn more about water treatment options at [Home Water Treatment](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html>).

For More Information

If you have questions about copper in drinking water, please call us at 507-684-2681.

Visit the Minnesota Department of Health's [Copper in Drinking Water](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/copper.html)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/copper.html>).

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This notice is being made available by:

CITY OF ELLENDALE

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Sampling Period: 6/1/2026 - 9/30/2026

Detect Long-Term
Population: 636

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