

Chloramine can affect health

The Town of Stettler, supplier of water to both the 12/21 and Shirley McClellan Regional Distribution Systems will be changing its disinfection process for drinking water from chlorination to chloramination. This change will affect the communities all along the Shirley McClellan water line running along side of Highway 12 from Halkirk to Consort. Chloramine is a combination of chlorine and a small amount of ammonia. Stettler has decided to use Chloramine instead of Chlorine because it stays in the water longer.

Unlike Chlorine, Chloramine cannot be removed by letting the water sit for a few days, or by boiling or by using salts. Complaints regarding the use of Chlorine in the water have surfaced since the change from town water to the Shirley McClellan water, which comes from the Red Deer River. According to Darrell Fiss, Maintenance Supervisor at the Coronation Hospital, there has been deterioration of all natural rubbers in the plumbing system and it has been necessary to have a replacement plan with a blue rubber meant to be used with chlorinated water. "We are also finding that there is sand or gravel in the water," said Fiss. "We don't know whether it is coming through the water or the Chlorine has caused the concrete lining on the inside of the storage tank to break down." "Nevertheless, our screens and filters will need to be replaced, a cost estimated at somewhere around \$15,000."

"As well," said Fiss, "we are having to put in a new Water Treatment system that will probably cost around \$30,000, with the additional cost for salt."

Standard for Chloramine

There is a standard to maintaining the use of Chloramine in the water. The Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL) of chloramine concentration should be at a level of no more than 4mg/L only. Even though chloramine-treated water is safe to drink and use, its MRDL should not exceed the standard. Drinking water with excess chloramines could cause anemia and stomach distress.

Chloramine in water can also cause lead from water pipes to leak into the water. This poses a threat to your health if lead contaminates your water supply. Chloramine is harmful if taken directly into the bloodstream, therefore Dialysis patients and those with kidney problems must contact their physicians to be fully informed as to how Chloramine will affect their condition.

Stettler is hoping to made the change during the month of October. Residents affected along the Shirley McClellan water system may not be aware of the change as Chloramine generally

does not emit an odour.