

# Is there *uranium* in your drinking water?

## What is uranium and where is it found?

Uranium is a radioactive substance that is naturally found in rocks, soil, and water in northeastern Washington State. Uranium is commonly detected in groundwater; high levels have been found in drinking water supplied by some wells. Although a very small amount of natural uranium in your drinking water may be common, elevated levels above the EPA standard of 30 µg/L can be harmful to your health.



## How can uranium affect me?



Elevated concentrations of uranium in your drinking water can potentially damage your kidneys and increase your risk of cancer.

Uranium can also break down into other potentially cancer-causing radioactive elements such as radium and radon.

## What can I do about it?

**Consider testing your water:** You can collect a water sample and send it to a laboratory to determine the concentrations of uranium and other constituents of concern. The Washington State Department of Ecology provides a list of laboratories that offer water testing: [apps.ecology.wa.gov/laboratorysearch](https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/laboratorysearch).

**What to do if high levels of uranium are found:** If you are concerned, a short-term option is to drink bottled water. A long-term solution is to install a treatment system to remove uranium as well as other radioactive elements from your drinking water. Treatment systems can be installed directly at the tap and can be relatively low cost.

*For more information on well water testing and treatment, please see Washington State Department of Health “Radionuclides in Drinking Water” fact sheet: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/331-056.pdf>.*

*For more information on naturally occurring uranium in groundwater in northeastern Washington State, please see: <https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2019/3069/fs20193069.pdf> and <https://wim.usgs.gov/geonarrative/uraniumgw/>.*