



Barium

If the level of Barium in your water is over **2,000 $\mu\text{g/L}$** , you should find a different source of water for drinking and preparing foods that take up a lot of water.*

What is barium?

Barium is a naturally occurring metal that is common in the environment.

- ▶ Barium can get into drinking water from natural and human sources. Human sources include drilling muds, coal power plants, and fillers for automotive paints.
- ▶ People can be exposed to barium from air, food, and water.

Can barium affect our health?

Studies among people and in research animals have shown that barium can cause health effects.

- ▶ In people, short term exposure to very high levels of barium can cause stomach and neurological problems. Long term exposure to lower levels of barium can affect the heart and nervous system.
- ▶ Studies in research animals have shown that exposure to large amounts of barium for long periods of time can affect the kidneys and body weight.

What can you do to protect your health?

Wisconsin has a groundwater standard of **2,000 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$) for barium.**

If the level of barium in your drinking water is above this, you should find a way to obtain safe water. Options include:

- ▶ Installing a certified treatment device.
- ▶ Drilling a new well.
- ▶ Connecting to a public water system or community well.

*Examples of foods that take up a lot of water include soup, rice, jello, and oatmeal.

Looking for more information?

- ▶ See the [factsheet](#) by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) for additional health information.
- ▶ Visit the [DHS website](#) for more information on Wisconsin's groundwater standards.

