



Important Health Information Regarding Your Drinking Water

Village of Ransom, Illinois

March 2012

What is radium?

Radium is a naturally occurring radioactive element and known carcinogen that usually is present at low levels in rocks, soils, and groundwater. In Ransom, and much of northern Illinois, radium levels are higher than other areas.

What is the maximum level of radium allowed?

EPA uses a measurement called a “picocurie” to describe the amount of radium in water. The maximum level of radium allowed by the EPA in drinking water is 5 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). Ransom water averages 11 pCi/L.

Should I be concerned?

Ransom residents have been drinking water with more than 5 pCi/L for a long time. That means your risk from radium exposure is higher than for people in communities with no radium problem. Children may be at higher risk because they absorb more radium in their bones as they grow.

For more information

You may contact Heather Shoven of the Water Division in EPA’s Chicago office at shoven.heather@epa.gov.

Or call (312) 886-0153

On the Web:

www.epa.gov/region5/water/gwdw/ransomil/

If you have questions or concerns about the status of the village’s water treatment, please contact the Village of Ransom directly.

For many years, your drinking water has contained more radium than the federal government allows. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is concerned because long-term exposure increases the risk of developing certain health problems. The Village of Ransom must find a permanent way to reduce radium levels in the water supply.

EPA officials will be in your area on Wednesday, April 4, 2012, from 3 to 8 p.m. to answer questions from anyone who has concerns about radium in their drinking water.

In the meantime, you may choose to take precautionary steps to reduce your radium exposure. This is a personal decision based on cost, convenience and your view of risk.

How radium can affect your health

Over-exposure to radium increases the risks of developing certain cancers, particularly bone cancer. Over time, radium can damage bones, tissue or genetic material.

How to reduce your risk

You may decide to use bottled water for cooking and drinking. You may also choose to install a water softener or a home water treatment unit. For example, ion exchange or reverse osmosis devices can reduce radium concentrations.

Help for choosing home treatment devices

If you would like help selecting the size and type of treatment device best suited for your home, contact the Water Quality Association at www.wqa.org or 800-749-0234. For information on the effectiveness of a particular home treatment unit, contact the National Sanitation Foundation at www.nsf.org or 800-673-8010.

What is EPA doing

EPA has ordered Ransom to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act and reduce the amount of radium in the village water. EPA has issued several legal warnings and enforcement orders and has offered its assistance since 2005, but village officials have not yet complied. EPA’s most recent enforcement order required the village to reduce radium levels by the end of 2011.

EPA availability session information

EPA officials will be at the Ransom Village Hall on Wednesday, April 4, 2012, from 3 to 8 p.m. to answer questions from anyone who has concerns about radium in their drinking water. The Ransom Village Hall is located at 203 E. Thomas St.