



December 1, 2025 - This seasonal water quality advisory for the EAPWSS has ended. Geosmin and MIB in the water source are no longer being detected, and as a result the taste and odour advisory that has been in place since October 1, 2025 has been rescinded.

Lake Erie Water Quality – Seasonal Taste and Odour Advisory

October 1, 2025

Some area residents who consume water supplied by the Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System (EAPWSS) may have noticed an unusual taste or odour in their drinking water recently. Consumers sometimes describe their water as tasting or smelling earthy, musty, moldy, swampy or organic. Some people are sensitive to the taste and odour, but others may not notice it at all.

This taste and odour is currently being caused by geosmin and 2-Methylisoborneol (MIB) in the raw lake water. Geosmin and MIB are harmless, naturally occurring organic compounds which typically increase in the lake water in late summer and early fall. Geosmin and MIB are naturally produced by algae or cyanobacteria in the surface water. The presence of geosmin and MIB is often intensified by warmer water temperatures and rainfall events.

Geosmin and MIB are harmless and there is no impact to water quality from a health perspective. The treated water supplied from the EAPWSS continues to meet the stringent water quality standards established by Ontario Regulation and remains safe to drink. The water system's contracted operating authority, the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA), works diligently to ensure the treated water quality continues meet the drinking water standards; however, some consumers may notice a change in taste or odour of the water as a result of the geosmin and MIB.

Operations staff at the Elgin Area Water Treatment Plant (WTP) monitor taste and odour closely. The number of laboratory samples being collected has increased, and staff make operational adjustments as needed to address constantly changing conditions. This includes increasing the use of powder activated carbon (PAC) in the treatment process to combat any strong taste and odours associated with geosmin & MIB.

It is not possible to predict how long a taste and odour event caused by geosmin and MIB might last. Geosmin and MIB levels in the lake are expected to fluctuate in the coming weeks.

If consumers are sensitive to the taste and odour of their drinking water, they may want to consider putting a glass pitcher of water in the refrigerator to allow the taste and odour to dissipate with the colder temperature. Cartridge filters may also help combat the taste and odour. Geosmin and MIB are not harmful and the water remains safe to drink.

Consumers with questions or concerns about the supply of drinking water from their municipal water distribution system should contact their local municipality.

Background

The Elgin Area Water Treatment Plant (WTP) utilizes a conventional chemically-assisted sedimentation and filtration water treatment process to treat and supply drinking water approximately 138,000 people in the municipalities of Bayham, Central Elgin, Dutton Dunwich, Malahide and Southwold, as well as the Town of Aylmer and the cities of St. Thomas and London.

On average, the Elgin Area WTP supplies about 45 million litres of water per day to area municipalities, with a maximum summer peak in the order of 65 million litres.

Raw water from Lake Erie, treatment processes, and treated drinking water supplied to area municipalities are continuously monitored using computerized analyzers. Onsite operational laboratory testing is conducted at the WTP every four hours to monitor and confirm treatment processes and water quality. Additional samples are sent to an accredited laboratory daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly to verify treatment quality and to further ensure the treated drinking water meets the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards.

The taste and odour of the water from Lake Erie is treated at this facility using powder-activated carbon (PAC) added to the raw water as it enters the water treatment facility, which is subsequently removed through the sedimentation and filtration processes.

The drinking water supplied to area municipalities is disinfected using both chlorine and ultraviolet light (UV), and chlorine residuals are monitored and maintained in the transmission system which supplies the area municipalities.

Additional information about the Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System is available at: <https://huroneginwater.ca/>

For further information please contact: general@huroneginwater.ca