



## Drinking Water

### 1. Is the tap water in Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah safe to drink?

Yes, the tap water is safe to drink. Residents of Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah receive their tap water from the City of Yellowknife. The drinking water is collected from the Yellowknife River upstream of the former Giant Mine, before the river enters Yellowknife Bay. Information on how water is treated, monitored, tested and protected is available at [www.nwtdrinkingwater.ca](http://www.nwtdrinkingwater.ca).

The City of Yellowknife occasionally draws water directly from Yellowknife Bay when maintenance on the water pipe is required. Yellowknife Bay is tested regularly for arsenic and has consistently shown arsenic levels below the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*<sup>1</sup>. Treated water from Yellowknife Bay is tested to ensure that it does not affect the quality of our drinking water.

Regardless of water source, or whether water is delivered by truck or not, levels of arsenic in drinking water for the communities of Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah remain below the limits set in the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*.

### 2. Is it safe to drink water from lakes surrounding Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah?

Lakes with green dots on the advisory map have arsenic concentrations that are below drinking water guidelines; however it is recommended not to drink untreated water anywhere in the NWT, primarily because of harmful microorganisms (germs such as *E. coli*, *Giardia*, *Cryptosporidium* and viruses) that could make people sick. Individuals may, on occasion, choose to boil water taken from these lakes for personal use. Boiling water kills these harmful microorganisms.

Lakes with yellow, orange, red and purple dots on the advisory map have arsenic concentrations above drinking water guidelines. Boiling water does not remove arsenic. It is advised to avoid drinking water from the following water bodies, even if it is boiled:

- Kam Lake, Frame Lake, Rat Lake, Peg Lake, Meg Lake, Jackfish Lake, Fox Lake, Handle Lake, Gar Lake, David Lake.
- Other unnamed lakes near Giant Mine.

For information or advice on water treatment options while out on the land, please contact Environmental Health at [environmental\\_health@gov.nt.ca](mailto:environmental_health@gov.nt.ca) or at 867-767-9066 ext. 49262.

None of the affected lakes where arsenic has been measured at higher levels (shown on the public health advisory map) are sources of drinking water for Yellowknife, Ndilo or Dettah.

As the Chief Public Health Officer receives new data from research or monitoring programs, the map of affected lakes and the associated health advice will be updated and the public will be notified.

## **KEY MESSAGES**

- Treated drinking water that comes from the City of Yellowknife for residents of Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah is tested regularly for arsenic and is safe to drink.
- Water from Yellowknife River and from Yellowknife Bay is low in arsenic.
- Untreated water may contain bacteria and viruses that can make people sick. Boiling water can kill harmful microorganisms, but it does not remove arsenic.
- If people choose to boil their own water from lakes in the area, it is recommended to avoid using water from lakes close to mines and other industrial sites.

1 – Health Canada (2019). Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality – Summary Table. Water and Air Quality Bureau, Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch, Health Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.