



## **Town of Stellarton Water Update**

### **Water Sampling Plan (2021)**

Almost annually, Stellarton experiences a period in which there may be a taste and odour change to residents' water. Through third-party testing, we identified the presence of Geosmin and 2-Methylisoborneol (MIB) - two naturally occurring compounds—in our water supply. While these have had an impact on the taste and smell of the water, they are not toxic or harmful.

The Town's Water Treatment Plant (WTP) has developed an extensive sampling plan for testing of Geosmin/Microcystins in June 2021. The goal of the sampling plan is to determine the exact period in time these compounds are present in the raw and treated water with additional testing for other compounds that can be present. Since conventional water treatment will not remove these compounds, the Town will use this data to explore treatment options.

For more information on MIB and Geosmin:

### **Why is there a taste and odour to the water?**

As the seasons warm up, residents may have noticed a change to the smell and taste of their water. We have received reports of water seeming musty, tasting dirty, and smelling mouldy. The Town monitors water properties daily to ensure that although the water has had these aesthetic changes, it has always remained safe for use and consumption.

Tests results, from a private third-party accredited laboratory, have confirmed the presence of Geosmin and 2-Methylisoborneol (MIB) – two naturally occurring compounds in surface water (ie. Lakes, rivers, streams, and dams) – in our water supply. While these have had an impact on the taste and smell of the water, they are not toxic or harmful.

### **What is Geosmin and MIB?**

These two non-toxic compounds are naturally occurring and are commonly found in surface waters like rivers – which is where Stellarton water comes from. They are organic molecules produced by blue-green algae, which thrives in bright sun and warm temperatures. These compounds are produced inside the algae and are only released when the algae die.

### **Is it still safe to use?**

While the taste and odour can be unpleasant, the water remains safe to drink and utilize. Daily monitoring of the water continues to show an absence of any harmful bacteria or other pathogens in the water.

### **How long should it last?**

Typically, we have noticed this issue occurs annually for approximately 2-4 weeks. However, since these are compounds that occur naturally, it is impossible to predict the onset of Geosmin and MIB in the water or how long it will last.

### **Is there any solution?**

Geosmin and MIB are not removed by conventional water treatment processes. There are several proven treatment options that can be utilized to remove these compounds from drinking water. However, any engineered treatment solution must first be evaluated to ensure the treatment will not negatively affect the current treatment processes.

Although not guaranteed, some at-home options that could help with the taste of the water are: Chilling it, adding ice cubes, adding a slice of lemon or lemon juice to drinking water.