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## Fact Sheet: Chromium and Drinking Water

### Your Drinking Water Quality

The City of Bremerton ensures the quality of your drinking water by proper operation of the water system and regular testing of water supplies. The City has been providing clean, safe water to our customers since 1917. The quality of Bremerton's tap water is excellent and complies with all required protective health standards.

### What is chromium?

Chromium is an odorless, tasteless metallic element that occurs in rocks, animals, plants, and soil. It occurs naturally in most water supplies. Chromium can be present as either chromium 3 (trivalent) or chromium 6 (hexavalent). Chromium 3 is a nutrient found in many vegetables, fruits, meats, grains, and yeast. Chromium 6, which is toxic, occurs naturally in the environment due to erosion of natural chromium deposits and can be produced by industrial processes. Chromium 6 is used in manufacturing processes such as electroplating, pulp processing, and wood treatment and can be found in products such as treated wood, tanned leather, and stainless steel.

### What are the health effects of chromium 6?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviewed studies that indicated continued exposure to chromium 6 could result in skin reactions. Although chromium 6 can cause cancer when inhaled, the effect of chromium 6 when ingested is less well studied. Further evaluations of the health effects of chromium 6 are presently underway by federal and state agencies.

### Is chromium in Bremerton's water supply?

Bremerton's water system is mostly surface water which has negligible levels of chromium. Groundwater sources in Bremerton contain low levels of chromium and similar results are found in other Kitsap area water systems and throughout the United States. Bremerton's results are well below the established limits as described in the next paragraph.

### How is chromium regulated?

The federal limit for total chromium in drinking water is 100 parts per billion (ppb). Bremerton's levels have been less than the detectable limit of 10 ppb. In 2013–14 Bremerton, along with other large water systems, was required by EPA to increase testing for both total and chromium 6 with lower detection limits. Bremerton took 16 samples with results ranging from non-detectable to 1.87 ppb, well below the federal requirement of 100 ppb and the California requirement of 10 ppb. Bottled water is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and would have similar levels of chromium as its source water unless advanced treatment was used. EPA is reviewing chromium health effects based on new science to determine whether a new health limit is necessary.

### How is the City of Bremerton protecting the public's health from chromium?

Bremerton's water sources are protected and far from industrial locations. Chromium present in Bremerton water is likely naturally-occurring. Regular testing of water sources in Bremerton for chromium and other chemicals verifies the excellent quality of the water. Visit the following for additional information:

<http://www.drinktap.org/water-info/whats-in-my-water/hexavalent-chromium.aspx>

<https://www.epa.gov/dwstandardsregulations/chromium-drinking-water#is-total-chrome-health>