

'WE NEVER DRINK FROM THE TAP'

RESIDENTS CAUTIOUS OF HARD WATER SUPPLY

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Clean water is essential for a variety of reasons.

For many Halton Hills residents, this means navigating the challenges of water hardness levels greater than most other Ontario municipalities.

Isobel and Jim White — who've lived in Georgetown for nearly half a century — never drink from their tap.

"The water quality has never been the best," said Isobel, adding that the purchase of a water softener with every move was always top priority.

Those sentiments are

echoed by many others across Halton Hills, who've expressed concerns related to the costs of installing a water softener, as well as calcium buildup in kettles, bathtubs and water heaters, skin dryness, restricted cleaning capabilities, and the hard water supply's impact on fish.

Halton Hills relies entirely on groundwater, which is generally harder than surface water.

According to Andrew Farr, Halton Region's commissioner of public works, "Hardness is not a health-related parameter and does not present an issue with respect to the use of the groundwater for municipal water supply."

In 2021, the hardness levels of water — a measure of dissolved minerals, usually calcium and mag-



Surinder Arora is among many local residents with concerns about water quality.

nesium — was 312 mg/L for Acton and 340 mg/L for Georgetown, said Farr.

These values, he added,

are in the same range as other municipal groundwater systems across southern Ontario, includ-

ing Cambridge, Guelph and Waterloo.

On a national level, however, half of all municipalities had hardness levels below 80 mg/L, according to the Government of Canada's website.

The website also notes water supplies with hardness levels greater than 200 mg/L are considered poor, but have been tolerated by consumers.

Surinder Arora is a newcomer to Georgetown and noticed increased hair loss, which he believes could be from the use of hard water.

Another concern for Arora is the accumulation of a "thick layer of calcium" when boiling water in a kettle — something Isobel and Jim continue to witness on a smaller scale after installing a water softener and filter. When washing dishes or doing the laundry, "you have to use extra soap and extra force," Arora said.

Now shopping for a wa-

ter softener, Arora said a monthly payment of around \$30 or a one-time investment \$2,000 to \$8,000 is a financial strain for those living paycheck to paycheck.

Also living in Georgetown for the last 50 years, Christel Weindl said she always boils the water before consumption, even though she is "losing some nutrients value."

Calcium and magnesium, the two most common minerals found in hard water are considered essential in our diet, said Farr.

The degree of hardness of drinking water may be classified in terms of its calcium carbonate concentration, states the Government of Canada website.

Halton Hills' watershed has a naturally higher calcium carbonate concentration, approximately 90 mg/L, said Farr. This

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