



Information Sheet: Aluminium in Drinking Water

How often have you heard: 'It must be something in the water.'

Well there is some truth in that statement as water is made up of many components and, as such, it has become the subject of many old wives tales and scare stories...

Aluminium has come under the spotlight as a potentially harmful substance found in drinking water. But how much of it is really true?

How does it get there?

Aluminium is the most abundant metallic element in the earth's crust, constituting about 8%. It is not surprising therefore, to find that it is commonly present in the soils and rocks of the Island. As the rainwater percolates down through the peat layers and soils of the mountains, and into the underlying rocks, it absorbs the aluminium as a soluble oxide.

Is there reason to worry?

No, the levels of aluminium found in the Island's water supply are usually within the comprehensive EU guidelines the Authority have adopted. Medical research in the early 1980's indicated there was a connection between aluminium levels in drinking water and a form of senile dementia: Alzheimer's disease.

However, more recent research has moved away from this opinion, after suggestions that the links are tenuous and inconclusive. Considering research worldwide, the latest theory from scientific and medical experts is that:

'Owing to the limitations of the animal data as a model for humans and the uncertainty surrounding the human data, a health based guideline value for aluminium in drinking water cannot be derived at this time.'



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