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More bad news about arsenic in drinking water

A new study by researchers at the National Institutes of Health found mice exposed to low doses of arsenic in drinking water, similar to what some people might consume, developed lung cancer.

The US *National Institutes of Health (NIH)* is one of the world's foremost medical research centers, located in Bethesda, MD, United States. It said arsenic levels in public drinking water cannot exceed 10 parts per billion (ppb), which is the standard set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. However, there are no established standards for private wells, from which millions of people get their drinking water.

“This is the first study to show tumor development in animals exposed to very low levels of arsenic, levels similar to which humans might be exposed,” said Michael Waalkes, Ph.D., lead author on the paper and director of the National Toxicology Program (NTP) Laboratory.

“The results are unexpected and certainly give cause for concern.”

And Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and NTP, told Science20.com that although “this is only one study, it adds to a growing body of evidence showing adverse health effects from very low exposures to arsenic, raising the possibility that no level of arsenic appears to be safe.”

Arsenic is present in the environment as a naturally occurring substance or due to contamination from human activity. Arsenic may be found in many foods, including grains, fruits, and vegetables, where it is present due to absorption from the soil and water. The NIH study focused on inorganic

arsenic, which often occurs in excess in the drinking water of millions of people worldwide, and has been previously shown to be a human carcinogen.

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