



Nickel for Your Thoughts

The metallic element nickel (Ni), shortened from “Kupfernickerl” meaning “Devil's copper,” was discovered in 1751 and is the fifth most common element present in the Earth after iron, oxygen, silicon, and magnesium.

Many Canadians might guess that nickel's main use occurs in the production of coins, particularly that of nickels. In fact, today the Canadian nickel is a nickel-plated steel disc. According to the Nickel Institute, about 85 per cent of the 1 million tonnes of nickel mined yearly is alloyed with other metals.

Over 60 per cent of nickel is used in the manufacturing of stainless steels with various applications in buildings and infrastructure, chemical production, communications, energy supply, environmental protection, food preparation, water treatment, and travel. It is also used in numerous everyday household products such as rechargeable batteries, power tools, and kitchen appliances.

Nickel is vital to the Canadian mining industry, the third-largest nickel producer in the world. Currently, nickel is being mined in Thompson, Manitoba, the Sudbury Basin of Ontario, and the Ungava peninsula of Quebec. In 2006, mining began in Voisey's Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, home to the largest known Canadian deposit of nickel.

To learn more about nickel, go to www.nickelinstitute.org.