

Other Common Water Quality Issues

A Guide to

Flushing your Water Pipes



Issue	Cause	Solution
Metallic taste or smell	Corroding pipes or fittings (plumbosolvency)	Plumbosolvency is when minute traces of the metals in your pipework and fittings leach into the water when it is not being used. Turn a tap on full for a couple of minutes to flush the pipework.
White, cloudy or milky water	Air in the water	If you hold up a glass up to the light, there will be tiny bubbles moving up from the bottom of the glass. This is not harmful. Leave some water standing in a clear glass and the white colour should disappear after a short time.
Bad taste or odour	Growth of plants and algae in the river. The purification process removes most of the natural odour and is rarely detected in cold water, although may be noticeable in warmer water.	Try keeping a jug of fresh, cold, tap water in the refrigerator for drinking and cooking. Carbon filters can also be used to remove taste/odour, but must be carefully maintained.
Green or blue water, green stains on plumbing	Corroding copper pipes at home.	Replace old copper pipes.
Low pressure in washing machine or shower head	Filter in modern equipment becoming clogged.	Flush pipes. Clean filters behind taps and shower head. Consider how old your house connection is and whether it needs replacing.
Swampy or sulphur odour coming from sink	Dirt or decaying debris caught in drain.	To confirm this, fill a glass with cold water and take immediately to another room in the house. If water is odourless, odour is coming from your drain. To correct the problem, pour a small amount of bleach down the drain, wait a few minutes, then run your cold water tap for a minute to flush the drain.

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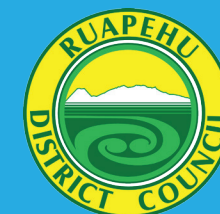
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Water sits in your pipes

When you return to your home (or holiday home) after a lengthy period of being away, remember that water will have been left sitting in your household pipes for the time your house has remained unused.

Restoring water flow

It is likely that, while water has sat in the pipes unused, compounds (such as iron and magnesium) will have built up. When you restore the water flow to your household, these compounds become re-suspended and may cause some water discolouration.

Taste and odour

Other issues such as taste and odour are also likely to occur (commonly from debris sitting in the pipes), as well as sudden spurts of water due to the release of trapped air. These are all quite normal and, while not ideal, are not harmful.

**Got a problem with the quality of your house water?
Try flushing the pipes**

Flush your pipes

The Ministry of Health "Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality" recommends that you flush your household water pipes at least twice a year. Allow time for the water to clear itself.

How do I flush my pipes?

Follow the steps below to flush your pipes:

- 1 Turn any outside taps on full flow. Run for one minute, then turn off.
- 2 Turn the laundry cold tap on full flow. Run for one minute then turn off.
- 3 Turn on all of the cold taps in the house. Run for one minute then turn off.
- 4 Turn the kitchen hot water tap on full flow. Run for one minute then turn off.

What if we have more than one hot water cylinder?

Repeat step (4) above for each hot water cylinder (eg, if one is in the kitchen, run the kitchen hot water tap for **one** minute. If a second is in a bathroom, run the bathroom hot water tap for **one** minute).

What if we have a gas hot water cylinder?

Run the hot water tap for **one** minute.

What about appliances that use water from the reticulated system?

Do you have appliances that utilise water from the reticulation, such as any of the following?

- In-line drinking water filter.
- Fridge mounted water dispenser.
- Commercial dishwasher.
- Ice maker.

Where performance seems impaired, consult the operating manual for cleaning or replacing the associated filter. Maintenance is important.

What about my washing machine?

If your machine is plumbed directly into the house pipework (ie, it is not linked to the laundry tub), it is recommended to run a short warm washing cycle without clothing, once a month, to clear the water lines. You should also clear the filters in the hoses regularly.