

Discoloured Water

Drinking water from your tap will normally look clear and bright with no visible particles. On rare occasions, it might appear yellow, orange, brown, cloudy or black. Discoloured water is usually due to the disturbance of rust deposits that have formed when there has been localised corrosion in the water pipe. Some drinking water sources may contain higher levels of naturally occurring iron or manganese. This may result in settlement within water mains. Under normal circumstances, the presence of these settled deposits in water mains has no effect on water quality but when unavoidable changes are made to the direction of flow of your water or when essential maintenance work is being carried out on the water mains they can be re-suspended to cause discolouration.

Re-suspension may also occur when a water main bursts, during operational activities such as the opening and closing of valves, excessive customer demand for water on hot sunny days or when there is a sudden increase in water use e.g. for fire fighting purposes. Discolouration can also be due to the condition of the pipe work connecting your house to the water main or even the condition of the plumbing within your house.

Is discoloured water harmful?

Whilst discoloured water caused by iron and manganese deposits is unlikely to be harmful to your health, it is sensible not to use discoloured water to make up infant feeds or babies' bottles.

Discoloured water can cause a considerable nuisance as it can affect the colour and taste of the water and, on some occasions, the iron may discolour laundry. If this happens firstly check that your mains water is clear then re-wash your clothes after following a few simple tips:

- Keep the clothes damp and run the tap until the water runs clear
- Use a synthetic detergent rather than a natural soap
- Do not add bleach
- Do not boil clothes
- Rinse clothes by hand

Our response to discoloured water

If we experience a burst on a major water main or other event that causes significant discolouration, water samples will be taken in the areas affected to check the levels of iron or manganese. When higher levels of iron, manganese are detected we carry out repeated water sampling to determine when the water quality in the area has returned to normal. Sometimes, discolouration may continue at properties located near the extremities of our water distribution systems in which case we ask customers to call us so that we can arrange for the water main to be flushed through to restore a clear supply of drinking water.

What to do if you get discoloured water

Discolouration usually clears fairly quickly after a few minutes of flushing the tap, but if you are concerned or the problem persists and does not clear after approximately 45 minutes of flushing, please contact our customer help line on **0800 052 0130**. You might wish to see if your neighbour has the same problem before contacting us.

Where can I get further information?

Please call us first on our operational helpline on **0800 052 0130**. One of our regulators, the Drinking Water Inspectorate, is responsible for ensuring the high quality of public water supplies. You can visit their website at: www.dwi.gov.uk