

# Copper pipe corrosion and water quality

## What is copper pipe corrosion?

Copper pipe corrosion may occur when water is in contact with copper pipes. Higher copper levels can occur when the water is not used for a period of time.

## Is copper harmful?

Copper is not harmful to healthy adults, unless it is consumed in high quantities over a period of time. The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) recommend that the level of copper in drinking water should be less than two milligrams per litre.

## How do elevated copper levels look and taste?

- Cloudy, blue or blue-green water coming from the cold water tap.
- Small clumps of blue crystals in the water.
- Blue stains on the hand basin, bath or other plumbing fixtures.
- An unpleasant bitter or metallic taste.

## How can I check for copper pipe corrosion?

**You will need:** A white ice-cream container.

### Step 1

Run two or three litres of water, at full flow, into the container.

### Step 2

Let it stand for a few seconds.

If the water has elevated copper levels, it may appear blue or cloudy-blue, or have blue particles present.

## What can I do about copper pipe corrosion?

### Short-term

- Turn the tap on at full pressure for 30 seconds.
- Re-test the water using a white container.
- Keep flushing the tap until the water is clear.

### Long-term

Replace old copper pipes with new ones made from an alternative material.

## How do I know which pipes are affected?

You can contact a licensed plumber to assess the level of corrosion in your pipes.

