

Q. Why is my water rusty or dark brown?

A. Naturally occurring iron deposits have been stirred up within the water main system, this is often a result of water main flushing, which occurs in April and October. Another way this can happen is when a fire hydrant is used, either in the event of a fire near your home or unauthorized hydrant use. Whenever water is moved rapidly through the water mains, the iron deposits that settle to the bottom of the pipe get stirred up. We have also noticed a trend during hot weather, when a large number of irrigation systems are running and creating high water demand, the iron in the system can be stirred up.

Is iron in drinking water harmful and is it safe to drink?

Human bodies require iron to function properly, but iron, like many substances, is toxic at high dosages. However, you could not consume enough water to cause toxic levels of iron in your body.

The Environmental Protection Agency considers iron in drinking water as a secondary contaminant, which means it does not have a direct impact on health. Although it won't harm your health, iron will stain clothes and plumbing fixtures. You can stop the iron, before it enters your home, with an iron filter and water softener.

What can I do to clear the water?

- Run several of the faucets in your home until the water clears, this should only take 30 minutes or less.
- Check with your neighbors, if your house is the only one affected, it's often an internal plumbing issue with your home
- Check your water softener. Do you have salt in it? We recommend iron fighter salt, which is typically packaged in the green bags. Failing water softeners will often build up large amounts of iron and will start to release the iron and possibly even a sand type of material. If this is the case please try bypassing your water softener. While the softener is in bypass mode

run several faucets in your home, if the water clears, than your softener should be repaired or replaced.

- **Is only the hot water yellow or rust colored?** Iron will often buildup in the bottom of your hot water heater and if all of the hot water is consumed during a high demand period, the iron will be released. If this happens you should try draining or flushing out the hot water heater. Typically hot water heaters have a hose hookup on the bottom. Be careful! Hot water can cause burns.
- If your water staining continues, please call the water department for assistance.

Utility Supervisor John Nelson 763-433-9861