

DOES YOUR TAP WATER TASTE OR SMELL METALLIC OR BITTER?

Properties that have copper, iron, lead or galvanised pipes can get a taste or smell described as metallic, inky or bitter from the water. This is most noticeable first thing in the morning because water has been standing in the pipe work. If buildings have long lengths of pipework or water storage tanks you may also get this taste or smell because it is caused by in an internal plumbing issue.

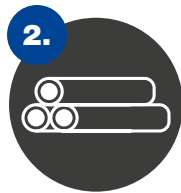
Then here's how to diagnose the source of the problem.

Check a few things out and it will help sort out the problem:



1. Is the water fresher after flushing your taps?

Run the cold taps to flush the systems and clear the old water away. You should notice a change in the water temperature when all the water has been cleared and it will smell and taste clear. If you think it is more of a chlorine/metallic smell or taste you can also look at our [Chlorine Checklist](#).



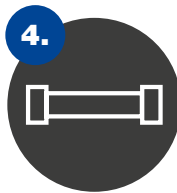
2. Are your pipes lagged?

Hot water pipes and central heating pipes running close to your cold water pipes should be lagged to stop heat transfer. If cold water is warmed in this way, it will cause a taste or smell change.



3. Do you have a water tank?

Check the condition of your tank. This should be securely covered, cleaned and maintained regularly. If the tank is corroding it will increase the metals in your water causing the taste and/or some discolouration. A registered plumber can help with this.



4. What type of metal pipework do you have?

Copper pipes allow small quantities of copper to dissolve in your water as the internal layer corrodes. Sometimes this layer breaks off and turns the water green, newly fitted copper pipes can give a bitter taste which will settle down over time. Iron pipework can give a metallic taste but also sometime some discolouration of the water which may be yellow/orange/brownish water. Flush all the pipes until clear if this happens.

Lead pipes allow lead to dissolve in water. **Always flush your tap before cooking or drink water from lead pipes.** As a water company we are promoting lead replacement to reduce any harmful effects of lead in the water supply. We can come and test your water free of charge if you suspect you have lead pipes. Contact us and see our website for more about lead. Always clean the jug between refills to avoid algae growth.



5. Are your fittings up to the job?

Taps are often coated or plated with metals and made from metal. If they are substandard then small quantities of zinc or nickel can flake off or dissolve into your drinking water. Always look to fit approved products.



6. Are your neighbours experiencing the same issues?

If you have done all the checks and fixes and you still have a smell or taste, or your neighbours have an issue as well, this sometimes happens in properties that share tanked water like a block of flats. It is worth checking with your landlord who is responsible for the tanks.

If you have done all the checks and fixes but need further advice please visit our website at www.nwl.co.uk or contact us on **0345 717 1100** so that we can help.

GREAT WATER TIPS Tap and sink

- Replace any lead.
- Lag pipes and maintain your water tanks.
- Use fittings and equipment that are approved.
- Collect and use the water from flushing the taps to water your plants or garden.