

**wellcare® information for you about**

# **IRON & WELL WATER**

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## **What is Iron?**

Iron is a chemical element that is classified as a metal. It is also an essential mineral found in our bodies. Iron is common in the Earth's crust. As water moves through soil layers it dissolves iron causing it to seep into groundwater. Iron pipes also may be a source of iron in water.

Levels of iron found in drinking water are considered harmless but can be a nuisance. Even the smallest amount of iron can stain your laundry and fixtures and give your water a bitter or metallic taste.

Iron can be in soluble or oxidized form. Water with soluble iron looks clear when it comes out of the faucet but has red rust in it when left standing. Oxidized iron looks red from the tap.

## **What are the health effects of Iron?**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers iron a secondary water contaminant. Secondary guidelines are established to assist in managing drinking water for aesthetic conditions, such as taste, color, and odor. Secondary contaminants are not considered a risk to human health at the suggested level. The suggested level for iron is 0.3 mg/L. Well owners should use this level as a guide for treating their well water.

## **How do I test for Iron?**

Contact your state or local health department for a list of state-certified laboratories in your area or use our [interactive map on our website](#). If you need assistance locating a laboratory in your area, contact our [wellcare®](#) Hotline at 888-395-1033.

## **What are the treatments for Iron in drinking water?**

Iron can be removed by activated carbon filtration, ion exchange, oxidizing chemical injection, oxidizing filtration, or shock chlorination. Tests of hardness, pH, salts (sodium and chloride), sulfates, tannins, and turbidity may be necessary to determine the most appropriate water treatment.

You can find products certified by [WQA](#) or [NSF](#) for the reduction of stain-causing contaminants such as iron. Contact a certified water treatment professional in your area for guidance. To search for a certified water treatment professional in your area use Water Quality Association's [website](#).

## For More Information on Iron

Your local well contractor, health department, cooperative extension service, and state environmental or natural resources department can provide more information about iron and groundwater in your area. If you need help locating these resources, contact the wellcare® Hotline at 888-395-1033 for assistance.



## Information to help maintain and protect your water well system:

wellcare® is a program of the [Water Systems Council \(WSC\)](#). WSC is the only national organization solely focused on protecting the health and water supply of an estimated 23 million households nationwide who depend on private wells (according to the U.S. EPA).

This publication is one of more than 100 wellcare® information sheets available FREE at [www.watersystemscouncil.org](http://www.watersystemscouncil.org).

Well owners and others with questions about wells and well water can contact the wellcare® Hotline at 1-888-395-1033 or visit [www.wellcarehotline.org](http://www.wellcarehotline.org) to fill out a contact form or chat with us live!

## JOIN THE WELLCARE® WELL OWNERS NETWORK!

By joining the FREE wellcare® Well Owners Network, you will receive regular information on how to maintain your well and protect your well water.

Contact us at 1-888-395-1033 or visit [www.wellcarehotline.org](http://www.wellcarehotline.org) to join!