

# METALLIC OR BITTER

This taste or smell is often described as being metallic, bitter, inky or like blood.

A metallic or bitter taste or smell to tap water is normally associated with increased concentrations of metals commonly found in domestic plumbing systems, such as copper or zinc.



The water from my cold tap tastes or smells:

## METALLIC OR BITTER

Water left standing in metal pipework for long periods can pick up traces of metals, giving rise to unusual tastes or smells often described as metallic or bitter – particularly in water from the hot water system.

This can be more noticeable in large buildings or in buildings with long lengths of pipe.

### THE TASTE OR SMELL IS NOTICEABLE FROM THE COLD TAP

*Are your pipes suitably lagged?*

Hot water pipes and central heating pipes close to your cold water pipe can raise the temperature of the water and if left to stand the water can pick up traces from copper or other metal pipe work in your home.

Check if your pipe work is suitably lagged. If it isn't, lag your pipework to make sure that the cold supply does not get warm.

*Do you have a water tank supplying water to your property?*

Older tanks can be made of galvanised iron, which will rust over time resulting in rust particles and iron dissolving into the water. If you have a water storage tank in your property the condition of this and the length of time that water sits in the tank can have an effect on how the water tastes or smells.

If you have a water storage tank, check what material it is made from and what condition it is in. Run your tap to draw fresh water in from the mains supply. You should notice a change in the water temperature when all of the water has been cleared from your system.

*Does the taste or smell improve if you boil the water?*

Some people can detect chlorine as a metallic taste. Some customers, particularly those who smoke, can identify the taste of chlorine as metallic. Take a look at the factsheet on chlorine.

*Have you recently had new pipes fitted?*

They may be copper and small quantities of copper can dissolve into the water until a natural protective layer is built up on the inside of the pipe. This should settle down over time once a protective layer has built up.

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### TASTE OR ODOUR IS NOTICEABLE IN WATER FROM THE HOT TAP

In some cases this taste or smell issue can be caused by parts inside your water heater system or tank deteriorating. Some water heating systems have a part inside which is designed to reduce corrosion inside the tank.

Try running the hot tap for few minutes. If this does not resolve it you may need to have your hot water heater and/or tank checked.