

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.

