

## What do the results mean?

This information is general in nature and may not be applicable to your specific circumstances.

Contaminant & Potential Health effects	Sources of water contamination
<p><b>Bacteria</b> Faecal coliforms and E.Coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes may cause short term effects, such as diarrhoea, cramps, nausea, headaches. They may pose a special health risk for infants, children and people with low immunity.</p>	Occur in both sewage and natural waters, may indicate human and animal faecal waste.
<p><b>Copper</b> High concentrations colour water blue/green. &gt;1 mg/L may stain fittings. &gt;2 mg/L can cause ill effects in some people.</p>	Corrosion of household plumbing by salt, low pH water, erosion of natural deposits
<p><b>Iron</b> High concentrations stain laundry and fittings. Iron bacteria cause blockages, taste/odour, corrosion.</p>	Occurs naturally in water, usually at <1 mg/L, but up to 100 mg/L in oxygen-depleted groundwater. Taste threshold 0.3 mg/L.
<p><b>Nitrate/Nitrite</b> Infants below the age of six months who drink water containing Nitrite/Nitrate in excess of the MCL could become seriously ill and, if untreated, may die. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blue-baby syndrome</p>	Occurs naturally. Runoff from fertiliser use, leaching from septic tanks, sewage. Food, particularly vegetables and cured meat, is the major source of nitrate intake for humans.
<p><b>Free Chlorine</b> Eye/nose irritation; stomach discomfort</p>	Widely used disinfectant, a water additive used to control microbes
<p><b>Lead</b> Infants and children: Delays in physical or mental development; children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities; Adults: Kidney problems; high blood pressure</p>	Corrosion of household plumbing, erosion of natural deposits
<p><b>Mercury</b> The main toxic effects of inorganic mercury are to the kidney, leading to kidney failure. Organic mercury is unlikely to be found in uncontaminated water however the effects are more severe including neurological disorder and mental disability</p>	From industrial emissions/spills. Very low concentrations occur naturally.
<p><b>Pesticide</b> Cardiovascular system, reproductive, blood problems</p>	Herbicide runoff
<p><b>Sulphate</b> Bad taste, can cause purgative affects</p>	Natural component of water and may be added via treatment chemicals
<p><b>pH/ Alkalinity</b> Extreme pH values (&lt;4 and &gt;11) may adversely affect health, &lt;6.5 may be corrosive. &gt;8 progressively decreases efficiency of chlorination. &gt;8.5 may cause scale and taste problems.</p>	A measure of the hydrogen ion concentration in water
<p><b>Total Hardness</b> Water that is too soft can be corrosive, can cause scale build up in pipes and create problems with the use of soaps and detergents.</p>	Erosion of natural deposits