

MANGANESE IN DRINKING WATER FAQ

What causes coloured drinking water?

Coloured water occurs due to the presence of manganese in the systems source water, Muskrat Lake. Manganese can cause brown or blackish brown coloured water and tends to increase in Muskrat Lake in the warmer summer months.

- Manganese is a mineral that is found naturally in the environment and is one of the most abundant metals on the earth's surface, in air, water, and soil. It can be found in both groundwater and surface water from natural sources.

Is manganese in water safe?

The limit for manganese in drinking water (0.05 mg/L) is set by the Province of Ontario and is an aesthetic objective. Aesthetic objectives are established for parameters that may impair the taste, smell, or colour of water. There is no health-based limit for manganese set by the Province of Ontario.

- Drinking water is regularly tested by OCWA and meets the provincial drinking water regulations set out by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP).

How is manganese removed from our water?

Manganese is removed from drinking water in Cobden through the addition of potassium permanganate prior to water filtration and through the flushing of fire hydrants.

Potassium permanganate is used to remove manganese from water. It causes the manganese to become a solid so that it can then be removed by the filtration plant filters.

OCWA has recently begun treating the water with potassium permanganate and therefore manganese levels in the drinking water system should begin to decrease over the coming days as the treatment is optimized.

Does Potassium permanganate cause pink water?

Potassium permanganate is effective at removing manganese, but only within a narrow window. Too much potassium permanganate can easily lead to pink coloured water instead of clear; therefore, the addition of potassium permanganate is undertaken in a slow and controlled manner over several days, to avoid causing pink coloured water.

What else can be done?

The water system operator is also flushing fire hydrants in Cobden to flush the manganese from the distribution system piping. While flushing will help remove the manganese, at the same time it can stir up accumulated iron sediment in the system.

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How can I remove coloured water and sediment from my home?

Residents are advised to run their taps on **cold** until the coloured water and sediment are removed. Taps should be run for at least five minutes or more until sediment and colour are no longer present.

- You should avoid running your hot water taps to avoid pulling sediment into your hot water heater. If sediment was pulled into your hot water heater, you should consider draining your tank. Other water tanks, such as fridge ice makers may also need to be emptied.
- Additionally, it is advisable to avoid running your washing machine while coloured water is visible as manganese can stain clothing.

How can I help?

The Township encourages all residents to contact the Township or OCWA whenever coloured water or sediment is experienced. All reports from residents when water quality issues arise help the system operator determine when manganese levels are causing coloured water and can help determine if specific neighbourhoods require increased hydrant flushing.

If you experience discoloured water, please run your cold water taps until the water runs clear, typically 5-10 minutes. If you have flushed your taps as above and are still experiencing issues, please contact the Township at 613-646-2282 or you can report water quality issues on the Township's website at www.whitewaterregion.ca/feedback. Please select "water and sewer" category and water quality subcategory.

