



Nickel in Tap Water

Where does Nickel come from?

Nickel is used in the nickel/chrome plating on taps and plumbing fittings and so can occasionally leach into water whilst it is in contact with the fitting.

The amount of nickel leaching into the water is most likely to be high if the fitting is new or the metal plating is deteriorating. Some ground water sources in the UK may contain nickel, however water supplies are treated and tested to ensure levels are below the legal limit.

How can Nickel affect my health?

High concentrations of nickel in tap water can cause skin irritation (allergic contact dermatitis). If you have experienced any skin irritation, a rash or sensitivity following washing, you should consult your GP and contact your local water company for further information.

What can I do about Nickel in drinking water?

If you suspect nickel from your tap water may be affecting your health, ask your water company to investigate.

If your water company has investigated and found a high concentration of nickel associated with a tap or plumbing fitting in your home, they should provide you with written advice on what you can do to reduce the concentration to a safe level.

Normally this can be achieved by running the tap for a short time (normally enough to fill the sink or a washing-up bowl) to remove standing water that has been in contact with the fitting. In some cases, you may need to replace the tap or fitting.

If you need to replace a tap or fitting, we recommend that you employ a qualified plumber to carry out any plumbing work. The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme provides information about accredited WaterSafe plumbers and approved fittings on its website; www.waterregsuk.co.uk. Alternatively, you can find information at; www.watersafe.org.uk.

Further Information

The Drinking Water Inspectorate is the independent regulator of drinking water quality for public water supplies in England and Wales. Visit www.dwi.gov.uk . Contact us at dwi.enquiries@defra.gov.uk or telephone 0300 068 6400.

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