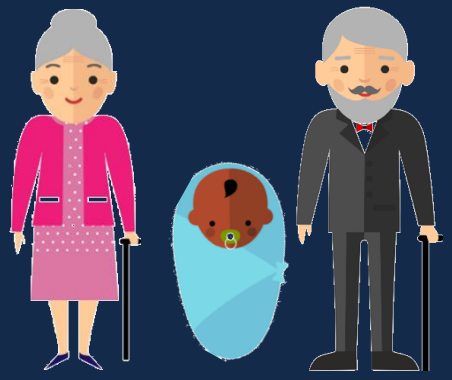
Take action if your private well has high manganese.

Manganese is a common element found in minerals, rocks, and soil and is often present with iron. Manganese can turn the water a brown or rust color and cause black staining on faucets, sinks, or laundry. Manganese may also make the water have a metallic taste and an unpleasant odor. You should test your private well for manganese if you notice these qualities in your water. **While manganese is part of a healthy diet at low levels, high levels may affect the nervous system, kidneys, and reproduction.**

Manganese levels over 300 µg/L pose an immediate health risk for sensitive groups.



People over the age of 50 and infants are the most sensitive to the effects of manganese.

When manganese levels are above 300 µg/L, these groups should stop using the water for drinking, making beverages and formula, and preparing foods that take up or use a lot of water.

Manganese levels over 300 µg/L pose a long-term health risk for everyone.

Long-term exposure to high levels of manganese can affect everyone.

Everyone should avoid long-term use of the water for drinking, making beverages and formula, and preparing foods that take up or use a lot of water.

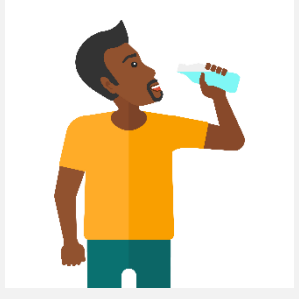
Flip over to learn more about how to protect yourself and your family from high levels of manganese.

µg/L = micrograms of manganese per liter of water
Examples of foods that take up or use a lot of water include soup, rice, Jello, and oatmeal.

Follow these steps to protect yourself and your family:

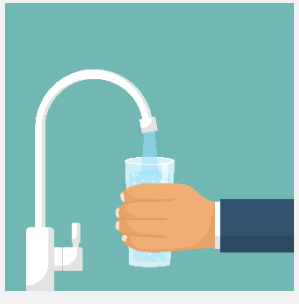
Test your well for manganese if your water is a brown or rust color and cause staining on your plumbing fixtures.

Manganese may also make the water have a metallic taste or an unpleasant odor. Contact a certified lab for a kit to test your well for manganese if you notice these qualities.



Use a safe source of water if manganese levels are high.

Use bottled water or water from a well without a manganese issue for drinking and preparing foods that take a lot of water until the manganese level is confirmed and you find a long-term solution.



Retest your well to confirm results.

Collect a second sample (called a "confirmation sample") to determine if the first result is accurate.

You may also want to test your well for iron bacteria. While these bacteria do not pose a health risk, they can cause odors, corrode plumbing equipment, and increase the risk for contamination by other bacteria.

Find a long-term solution.

Options include installing a certified treatment device, drilling a new well, connecting to a public water supply, or establishing a community well. Talk with a licensed well driller or pump installer and your local DNR representative to figure out the best option.

Web Links and Additional Resources

The links in this document can be found at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/manganese.htm.
Learn about other drinking water concerns at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/hazards.htm.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services
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