

The aquifers in Washington County all have iron bacteria present, and water companies try to minimize the quantity of bacteria that we see by chlorinating and flushing fire hydrants and taps whenever necessary. Most systems in Washington County are bigger, which helps dilute the bacteria, and they also chlorinate which helps kill it. Unfortunately, nothing will remove it entirely, and in Winchester Hills we not only have a smaller system, but we don't chlorinate. The other issue we have is that we don't have curb & gutter, so we don't flush fire hydrants as often as we could, because when we flush we cause damage to homeowner's lots since there is no place for the water to go. Every so often, especially in the Spring when water users start watering more and flow in the system changes, this stirring causes some brown water or iron bacteria that has been collecting near fire hydrants and other areas to appear. We have filters on both of our wells to remove any sand before water enters the system, but this coloring in the water is from bacteria that is present and continues to grow inside of the pipe after water is pumped into the system. The filters remove the sand, but since iron bacteria growth is influenced by iron or metal, it grows in the system wherever there is iron or metal pipe. The fire hydrants and some of your homes have iron or metal pipes, faucets, water heaters, etc. which encourage bacterial growth. If a faucet or pipe is not active and water sits for very long, the bacteria symptoms appear and you have to flush the faucet until it clears and the color and smell goes away.

We battle this issue constantly, and would like to be able to somehow get rid of it completely, but our circumstances are unique and we have to try to maintain a system where the odds are stacked against us. Shareholders don't like chlorine, we have no curb and gutter so they don't like us to flush hydrants and cause property damage, and the aquifers that our Wells tap into for water all contain iron bacteria. Although it is not a health risk, the unpleasant smell at times, and the stains in toilets and on laundry are frustrating at best. These nuisance bacteria combine iron (or manganese) and oxygen to form deposits of "rust," bacterial cells, and a slimy material that sticks the bacteria to Well pipes, pumps, and plumbing fixtures. The bacteria are not known to cause disease, but can cause undesirable stains, tastes and odors. Experts say that no matter what you do, it will not remove all the bacteria. Most aquifers have it, including the Navajo Sandstone aquifer that is available to us for our Wells. The water is tested every month and is good tasting water full of minerals since we don't chlorinate.

We apologize for the trouble and frustration. We all battle it and see it in our water, other homeowners have these same frustrations. For the most part, people in Winchester Hills are very understanding and don't complain. We will continue to try and make improvements and develop processes to make our water more desirable. In the meantime, when you see the orange/brown color in your water, run your taps and your outside sprinkler system until it clears.

When you see color or bacteria in your water, it's probably better if you don't have to run your washer so it won't stain your clothes, and your dishwasher, but it won't ruin them. If you have a water softener you will probably need to change the filter, and make sure you flush your hot water heater often so the element stays clean. The key to any water system is using it and flushing it often, whether it's hot water heaters, water softeners, faucets, taps, toilets or outside watering systems. Keep your lines moving so the iron bacteria doesn't attach to the pipes, etc. It doesn't take a lot of water to flush, and if you use all your lines regularly it will move through and stay clear.

Thank you for your patience. Hopefully this information will help you understand the problem a little bit more. If you have any other questions, please contact us.