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[Copper in Drinking Water](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/copper.html)
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MCF-Faribault
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Important Information about Copper in Your Drinking Water



MCF-Faribault

has found elevated levels of copper in drinking water in some areas.

Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce copper in your drinking water.

Information revised 9/30/26 to be appropriate for a correctional facility.

Elevated Levels of Copper in Your Drinking Water

Our water system regularly samples for copper in our drinking water to make sure it meets Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

More than 10 percent of the locations sampled for copper were above the Safe Drinking Water Act action level for copper. The action level for copper is 1,300 micrograms per liter (the same as 1,300 parts per billion, or ppb).

What Are We Doing about the Issue?

We are looking at ways to reduce copper in our drinking water. We are also adopting a copper education program for all of our water users.

What Are the Health Effects of Copper?

Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage.

The level of copper that will cause symptoms varies from person to person. Nausea and diarrhea may

occur when copper levels are approximately 3,000 ppb.

Most people's bodies are able to maintain the right level of copper. People with Wilson's disease and some infants (babies under one year old) are sensitive to copper. Their bodies are not able to get rid of extra copper easily.

Sources of Copper

Copper is a reddish metal that occurs naturally in rock, soil, water, sediment, and air. It is used to make many products, including parts for plumbing systems.

Copper can get into your drinking water as the water passes through your plumbing system. Over time, plumbing parts usually build up a natural coating that keeps the water from absorbing copper from the plumbing.

Water may have more copper if:

- Your plumbing is less than three years old. It likely has not had time to build up a protective coating.
- It has been sitting in your pipes. The water has had more time to absorb copper from the plumbing.
- You use warm or hot water. Warmer water absorbs more copper from plumbing systems.
- You have a water softener. There may be less protective coating with softened water.

Reducing Exposure to Copper in Water

1. **Let the water run from individual faucets** before using the water for drinking or cooking and let the water run for 30-60 seconds.
2. **Use cold water** for drinking and making food. Hot water releases more copper from pipes than cold water.