



MISSOURI
AMERICAN WATER

WE KEEP LIFE FLOWING™

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information related to drinking water standards, customers can also call the EPA Hotline: 1-800-426-4791



QUESTIONS?

We can be reached at our Customer Service Center:
1-866-430-0820

Hours: 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

For emergencies,
we're available 24/7.

PROVIDING QUALITY IN EVERY DROP

TASTES AND ODORS

YOUR GUIDE TO WATER TASTES AND ODORS

Please refer to the information below to help identify and resolve tastes and odors that can sometimes arise in home plumbing. If the issue is present in all water faucets throughout your home or business, is present in primarily the cold water, does not disappear after running the water for a few minutes, and is impacting multiple customers, then there may be a disturbance in our water lines. Please contact Missouri American Water and we will work to address your concern. If the problem develops in just certain faucets or areas, and/or primarily in the hot water, then the cause is likely occurring internally. For internal plumbing concerns customers may wish to consult with a licensed plumber.

SULFUR/ROTTEN EGG

Bacteria growing in drains: When bacteria that has accumulated inside a drain react with drinking water, they produce gases that have a sulfur/rotten egg or musty/moldy smell. Customers often attribute the smell and perceived taste to the water, when in reality the odor is emanating from the drain. Plumbing with improper drain venting can also exacerbate the problem. To evaluate the cause, put a small amount of water in a narrow glass, step away from the sink into another room, swirl the water around inside the glass, and smell it. If the water has no odor, the problem is likely bacteria in the sink drain. Disinfect the drain by pouring a cup of bleach down it and letting it sit for at least 10 minutes. This can help eliminate bacteria and reduce odors. Customers may wish to consult with a licensed plumber if drain odors persist.

Bacteria growing inside hot water heaters: If water has an odor and it's more predominant in hot water, it's likely caused by a hot water heater. If the thermostat on the heater is set too low, it can create the perfect temperature and environment for bacterial growth.

Corrosion and mineral sediment can also build up inside a hot water heater, causing unpleasant tastes and odors. To reduce mineral buildup, most manufacturers recommend flushing the hot water heater at least once a year. Flushing the water heater regularly also extends the life of the heater and makes it operate more efficiently. If flushing does not resolve water heater odors, customers may wish to consult a licensed plumber.

ADDITIONAL TASTE AND ODOR CONSIDERATIONS

- Tastes and odors are more noticeable in warm temperatures than cold, which accounts for some seasonal differences.
- Third-party home water treatment devices can cause taste and odor issues if they are not maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Changes in medications and health can impact taste and smell. If you are the only individual in your home experiencing a change in taste and smell, consult with your physician.

Stagnant water in pipes from low or no water use: Water sitting unused inside water lines for long periods of time, especially during warm weather, may begin to develop sulfurous or rotten egg tastes and odors. This is common in guest bathrooms that are used infrequently, properties and apartments that sit vacant between owners or renters, empty vacation homes, and large buildings with low occupancy. Flush stagnant water from your internal water pipes by running the faucet for several minutes to pull in fresh water from distribution lines. The amount of time necessary will depend on the size of the building, the length of time the water sat unused, and the distance from the distribution mains.

Sulfur/rotten egg or moldy odors from washing machines or laundered clothes:

Stagnant water inside washing machines, especially front loading models, can grow mold and mildew that may produce unpleasant odors. Keep the washing machine door ajar between loads. This allows the interior of the machine to dry out better. Do not use more than the recommended amount of detergent as soap residue provides nutrients for mold. Periodically run an empty hot water wash with a cup of bleach or a commercial washing machine cleaning product. Some models of front loading washing machines have even been recalled due to design defects that results in persistent mold and mildew problems. Customers may wish to consult with a licensed plumber if odors persist.

EARTHY AND MINERAL

Changing weather conditions can lead to earthy or musty tastes and odors. This occurs seasonally, typically in the spring or fall. The perception of tastes or odors in water varies widely between individuals. Some customers are more sensitive and may perceive minor differences in the water. When variations in our source water occur, we adjust our treatment processes accordingly.

CHLORINE, CHEMICAL, OR MEDICINAL

Chlorine is used as a disinfectant and is critical to the water treatment process to kill bacteria and other waterborne organisms. The Missouri Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency require water utilities to limit the amount of chlorine that is added to the water, but also require systems to maintain a certain level of disinfectant in the distribution system even at the farthest points. Most customers do not perceive the taste of chlorine. However, customers with a more sensitive palate can reduce the taste of chlorine as follows:

- **If your water is treated with chlorine:** Place water in an uncovered glass container in the refrigerator overnight. This will allow the chlorine to dissipate at a faster pace. A container with a large opening works better than one that has a smaller opening. Alternatively, boil tap water for five minutes and allow it to cool.
- **If your water is treated with chloramine:** Boil tap water for 20 minutes and allow it to cool.
- **Add a lemon slice** or a few drops of lemon juice to a glass of drinking water.

Please Note: Once you remove the chlorine, be sure to refrigerate the water to limit bacterial regrowth. Missouri American Water does not recommend that the public remove all traces of a disinfectant in their water supply.

SALTY

Some customers have a third-party water softener. Most water softeners exchange sodium for existing calcium and magnesium in the water and, therefore, increase the sodium content of the water. If your softened water suddenly has a more perceptible salty taste, contact your water softener manufacturer.

