

# FACT SHEET: IRON IN DRINKING WATER

Elevated iron (Fe) is one of the most common water quality issues in Marion County wells. Water in Indiana is naturally high in iron from rocks and minerals in the ground. As rain falls or snow melts on the land surface, water seeps through iron-bearing soil and rock and it can be dissolved into the water. In some cases, iron can also result from corrosion of iron or steel well casing or water pipes. Iron in well water is noticeable as it stains sinks and fixtures an orange rust color.

## What are the regulations for Iron in drinking water?

There is currently no maximum contaminant level, or unsafe level, for iron in drinking water. Adverse health effects are not a concern when water contains high levels of iron. However, it can cause an unsightly appearance, unpleasant taste and stain plumbing fixtures, porcelain, and laundry. To prevent staining and discoloration, it is recommended to maintain a level below 300 parts per billion (ppb).



## How is Iron treated?

To control iron levels, well water can be treated through home water treatment systems. Iron filters (such as a manganese greensand filter) are a common treatment for moderate iron levels. Some of these filters can work in conjunction with water softeners. Aeration (injecting air) or chemical oxidation (usually adding chlorine in the form of calcium or sodium hypochlorite) followed by filtration are options if iron levels are higher.

For more information on treatment, please contact a professional water treatment company. When selecting a water treatment system, it is important that you verify that the technology is safe, effective and has been certified. NSF International ([www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org)) and/or the Water Quality Association ([www.wqa.org](http://www.wqa.org)) provide certification of water treatment systems.