HOW WILL COPPER BE DETECTED IN AND REMOVED FROM MY WATER?

The regulation for copper became effective in 1992. Between 1993 and 1995, EPA required your water supplier to collect water samples from household taps twice a year and analyze them to find out if copper is present above 1.3 ppm in more than 10 percent of all homes tested. If it is present above this level, the system must continue to monitor this contaminant twice a year. If contaminant levels are found to be consistently above the Action level, your water supplier must take steps to reduce the amount of copper so that it is consistently below that level. The following treatment methods have been approved by EPA for controlling copper: Corrosion control.

DRINKING WATER STANDARDS

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal:
1.3 parts per million

EPA Action Level:
1.3 parts per million

LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER!

If you would like additional information or if you have any questions concerning the City of Burlingame's testing data or water distribution system, please call the Public Works Department at 650-558-7670. You can also read our Annual Water Quality Report at **www.burlingame.org/waterquality.**

Do you want to learn more about drinking water regulations? Visit the State Water Resources Control Board at **www.swrcb.ca.gov**, or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website at **www.epa.gov.**

City of Burlingame
Public Works Department
650-558-7670
www.burlingame.org/waterquality

State Water Resources Control Board
District 17 - Santa Clara/San Mateo
510-620-3474
Home Treatment Device Certification Unit
916-327-1140
www.swrcb.ca.gov

Safe Drinking Water Hotline
800-426-4791
www.epa.gov

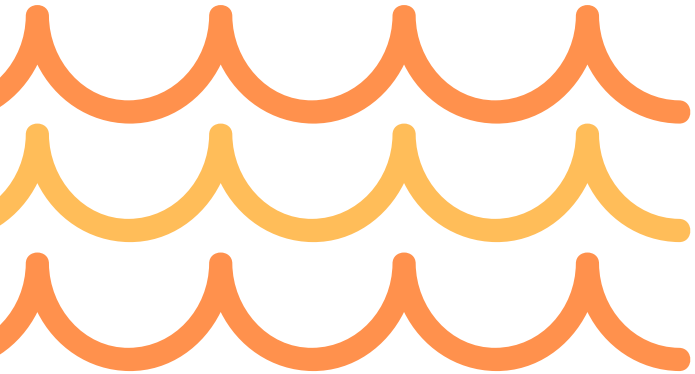
COPPER IN DRINKING WATER

WHAT IS COPPER?

Copper is a metal found in natural deposits as ores containing other elements. It is widely used in household plumbing materials.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH EFFECTS?

Copper is an essential nutrient, required by the body in very small amounts. However, EPA has found copper to potentially cause the following health effects when people are exposed to it above the Action Level. Short periods of exposure can cause gastrointestinal disturbance, including nausea and vomiting. Use of water that exceeds the Action Level over many years could cause liver or kidney damage. People with Wilsons disease may be more sensitive than others to the effect of copper contamination and should consult their health care provider.



WHY IS COPPER BEING REGULATED?

In 1974, Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act. This law requires EPA to determine safe levels of chemicals in drinking water which do or may cause health problems. These non-enforceable levels, based solely on possible health risks and exposure, are called Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLG).

The MCLG for copper has been set at 1.3 parts per million (ppm) because EPA believes this level of protection would not cause any of the potential health problems described below.

Since copper contamination generally occurs from corrosion of household copper pipes, it cannot be directly detected or removed by the water system. Instead, EPA is requiring water systems to control the corrosiveness of their water if the level of copper at home taps exceeds an Action Level.

The Action Level for copper has also been set at 1.3 ppm because EPA believes this is the lowest level to which water systems can reasonably be required to control this contaminant should it occur in drinking water. These drinking water standards and the regulations for ensuring these standards are met, are called National Primary Drinking Water Regulations. All public water supplies must abide by these regulations.

HOW MUCH COPPER IS PRODUCED AND RELEASED TO THE ENVIRONMENT?

Copper may occur in drinking water either by contamination of the source water used by the water system, or by corrosion of copper plumbing. Corrosion of plumbing is by far the greatest cause for concern. Copper is rarely found in source water, but copper mining and smelting operations and municipal incineration may be sources of contamination.

WHAT HAPPENS TO COPPER WHEN IT IS IN THE ENVIRONMENT?

All water is corrosive toward copper to some degree, even water termed noncorrosive or water treated to make it less corrosive. Corrosivity toward copper is greatest in very acidic water. Many of the other factors that affect the corrosivity of water toward lead can also be expected to affect the corrosion of copper.