AMERICAN WATER

WE KEEP LIFE FLOWING®

PARTICLES IN WATER

FOCUSING ON OUR CUSTOMERS

When it comes to providing safe, clean, reliable water service, **we hold ourselves to high standards** and are proud of our exceptional track record when it comes to **complying with and surpassing drinking water standards**.

Each year, our team of experts performs **millions of water quality tests** and works to protect our precious water resources.

We also invest billions of dollars annually in our water and wastewater treatment and pipeline systems.

We're committed to our customers and the communities where we live and serve.

This guide can help you determine the potential source of particles in your water and provides recommendations to address them.

PRIMARY SOURCES OF PARTICLES IN WATER

- **Utility main disturbances:** Due to activities such as main breaks, system improvements and water main flushing activities. Here's how to tell:
  - » Typically, particles are present in all cold water faucets throughout the home or business and do not disappear after running the water for a few minutes.
  - » Please check our alerts page at amwater.com/alerts to see if there are any active alerts in your area.
- **Internal plumbing**: Potential causes can vary. Here's how to tell:
  - » Particles only appear in certain faucets and/or present in hot water only.
  - » Particles may disappear after running the water for a few minutes or only appear in the morning when you first turn on the tap.
  - » For internal plumbing concerns, customers should contact a licensed plumber.

COMMON CAUSES AND ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

PARTICLE COLOR	COMMON CAUSE(S)	ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE
Black	**Very small and oily or sooty in texture:** Could be due to disintegrating internal plumbing hoses. These hoses—often under sinks, at water heaters, or in flexible kitchen or shower fixtures—may look like braided steel but contain black rubber inside that can break down over time.	**Replace the hose** or change it to a different style that does not contain rubber.
	Solid but rubbery in texture may be due to crumbling faucet washers and gaskets on your internal plumbing —usually present at one faucet that may leak.	**Replace the faucet washers or gaskets** and the packing at the ends of the supply lines.
	Hard and similar to coffee grounds: Granular activated carbon (GAC) from in-home water filters on pitchers, refrigerators, sinks, or for their entire home.	**Replace the filter cartridge** or consult with the manufacturer to eliminate these particles.

COMMON CAUSES AND ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE (cont.)

PARTICLE COLOR	COMMON CAUSE(S)	ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE
Orange or Brown	**Small, irregular size, hard, and may vary in color (even black):** This may be from internal pipe corrosion, mainly iron. These can break loose when water lines are disturbed by construction, pressure changes, or maintenance like water main flushing. • **Controlled and uncontrolled events in the water distribution system**: For example, main breaks or use of hydrants for firefighting and water main flushing procedures can stir up sediment in water mains due to the changes in the flow of water. • **Presence of naturally-occurring minerals such as manganese or iron in the water.** These minerals can build up in water mains over time, and when a disturbance occurs such as a main break, tiny particles may break loose. This may also occur in internal plumbing that has been unused for a period of time and water in the lines has become stagnant.	• **Flush your plumbing** with cold water (see instructions below). If these particles persists after 15 minutes, contact us. • It may be necessary to **clean your faucet aerator(s)** of the particles. • **Avoid doing laundry, making ice cubes or running the dishwasher** until the water is clear.
	Small, round beads that are uniform in size, shape, and color: This may indicate a broken in-home water softener. Many water softeners contain small, round resin beads. These beads can also be white, tan, orange, or brown depending on the manufacturer.	If you see these resin beads in your water, your water softener may need repairs.
White or Tan (possibly with blue-green staining)	**Thin irregularly shaped flakes**: Minerals like calcium and magnesium build up inside pipes over time and can flake off, especially after water line disturbances. Copper plumbing may stain these flakes a blue-green color.	Naturally occurring. See our fact sheet on hardness.
	Round and sand-like particles may come from mineral buildup in your water heater. When water is heated, it can cause minerals to form deposits that can clog faucets, shower heads, and appliance screens.	Please refer to the manufacturer's instructions related to flushing your hot water heater or consult with a licensed plumber.

LEAVES, DEBRIS AND INSECTS

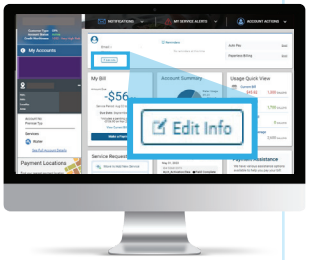
Exterior spigots are frost-proof and the shutoff valve is set deep inside the pipe to help prevent damage during freezing temperatures. This creates a space where insects and rodents can crawl inside and nest. When the spigot is turned on, debris—such as twigs and leaves used for nesting—can become dislodged and flushed out. Let the water to run for a few minutes to remove this material.

HOUSEHOLD FLUSHING INSTRUCTIONS

- Go to lowest floor in home that has a sink. Run the cold water in 5-minute increments until the particles clear. After your cold water is clear, flush your hot water taps in 5-minute increments until clear.
- If particles persist primarily when hot water is used, flush your hot water heater by following the manufacturer's instructions or contacting a licensed plumber.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO REACH YOU?

We use a mass-notification system to keep customers informed about significant water-related emergencies and events that impact service. Updating your contact information online will allow us to keep you better informed. While you're there, tell us how you prefer to be notified: by phone, text and/or email.* Visit amwater.com/mywater today. **Note to Landlords/Property Managers:** If you have tenants who are not direct customers, they can sign up for alerts at awcodered.com or by texting WATER to 24639.

**Standard text, data and phone rates may apply.*