

# Problems with staining on taps and fittings

## Water quality factsheet 8

**We sometimes get asked about discolouration and stains on taps, shower curtains, the grouting around tiles and other fittings.**

These kinds of issues are not normally caused by your water supply. They are a common problem in many homes, and tend to happen wherever the conditions are warm and damp – such as inside a bathroom, around a tap, on bathroom and kitchen tiles or inside a washing machine.

This factsheet explains the things you can do to minimise these stains.

We take water quality seriously at South West Water. This is one of a series of factsheets about water quality – you can find more factsheets at [southwestwater.co.uk](http://southwestwater.co.uk)

## How bacteria and mould build up near taps, showers and other fittings

Chlorine is a very effective disinfectant, so we add a low level of chlorine to drinking water to remove harmful bacteria. However, as soon as the water comes into contact with air, the chlorine evaporates.

This makes it easy for bacteria and mould to build up around your tap, shower head, the grouting around tiles, shower curtains, sink drain and toilet. The bacteria or mould may be a particular colour, such as pink or black so, once they build up, you will start to see discolouration.

## Getting rid of bacteria and mould in your kitchen and bathroom

To remove the bacteria and mould, clean your taps and fittings regularly and thoroughly with a mild disinfectant. Before using the tap to get drinking water, let it run for a moment to get rid of the disinfectant.

Airing your kitchen and bathroom regularly can also help to limit bacteria and mould. Here are a few ways to keep your kitchen and bathroom aired:

- after you've cooked or showered, open the window slightly.
- if you have double-glazed windows, keep the trickle vents open (these are normally narrow flaps at the top of the windows).
- install extractor fans or use a dehumidifier.
- avoid using aerosols, as they often contain ingredients that bacteria and moulds can feed on.

## Keeping filter jugs, vases and pet water bowls clean

If you leave filter jugs, vases and pet water bowls in sunlight, algae will start growing.

You can prevent algae growth by changing the water and cleaning the jug, vase and bowl regularly. Always keep your filter jug in the fridge, away from heat and light that can encourage the algae to grow.

## Cleaning your washing machine

Black bacteria or mould is common in washing machines, especially in the powder drawer and door seal. Keep the door open to air the inside of the machine, and mop up any water that forms pools anywhere in your machine.

Bear in mind that, although running your washing cycles on a low temperature can save energy, it can also increase the bacteria and mould growth inside the machine. To avoid this, run the machine on a 60° wash every now and then.

## Cleaning shower curtains and tile grouting

Pink discolouration on shower curtains and tile grouting is usually due to mould or fungus. This can be difficult to remove completely but, if you clean the areas regularly with a household disinfectant or bleach, you should be able to reduce the problem.

Try to clean the area whenever the mould reappears. If the area is not cleaned regularly, this can cause permanent staining.

## Where can I get more information?

You can get more information about stains and discolouration on our website at [southwestwater.co.uk/waterquality](https://southwestwater.co.uk/waterquality)

