

Stains, Rings, Discoloration, Mineral Deposits: What They Are & How to Take Care of Them

Our customer service team has responded to these common questions throughout the years and we have assembled some of the best information to help you. This guide is to help you identify the problem, what causes the issue, how to take care of it. It is easy to assume there may be a problem with your water, however most issues are not water quality related. Stains, Rings or Discoloration Rings in the toilet bowl are unsightly and in rare cases if left unattended, may develop into health hazards for humans or pets. Showerheads, spouts, aerators at the end of faucets, tile and grout, shower doors or curtains, crevices, nooks and crannies, and many surfaces can develop staining or discoloration. While some of the toilet bowl and other fixtures and surfaces may be perpetually wet, other areas are made wet occasionally and then allowed to dry before becoming wet again. This constant state of moisture encourages the growth of bacteria, molds and mildew, which form into toilet bowl rings and the other staining and discoloration.



Minerals in the water supply and even the chemicals used to clean can lead to toilet bowl rings and the staining and discoloration on other faucets, fixtures and surfaces.

Municipally treated water has been disinfected with chemicals in order to comply with local, state and federal standards. The issues of stains, rings or discoloration are issues that develop after the water comes into the home and is used or left to sit. Once chlorinated water is exposed to the air, the chlorine dissipates to a gas. The water in your plumbing system is in a closed loop and is not exposed to any issues until after it exits your plumbing fixtures or appliances.

Pink residue is generally not a problem with water quality. A pink discoloration may be a result of iron but would not be isolated to only one toilet, one fixture or one room. In most cases a pink residue is likely a result of airborne bacteria which produce a pinkish or dark gray film on moist surfaces. This film is usually found as a ring that accumulates at the water line in the toilet bowl, sinks, or around the shower. Many experts think that the bacteria that causes these pink stains is most likely *Serratia Marcescens*, a bacteria which is found naturally in soil, food, and in animals. *Serratia*, which produce a characteristic red pigment, thrive on moisture, dust, and phosphates and need almost nothing to survive. *Serratia* is easily carried airborne and will seek a moist location in which to grow. Some people have reported that the pink residue only appears during certain times of the year, when their windows or doors are left open for part of the day.



Often, our customers are concerned that something must be in the water which is not the case and nothing to fear. There are several things you can do to prevent the pink stains from developing. Drying wet surfaces after use will prevent the bacteria from growing. For toilets, simply get a good toilet bowl cleaner and squirt around the bowl from the rim of the toilet and allow to sit and then using a soft brush, apply light pressure against the bowl surface, swish the water around the bowl and flush. *Serratia Marcescens* cannot be completely killed and removed, but routine maintenance can keep the bacteria from reappearing, increasing or becoming a more stubborn issue. Remember to flush any guest or infrequently used toilets on a daily basis to avoid setting a stain. For harder to remove stains you can use regular household bleach and a soft bristle cleaning brush to gently scrub the affected area. The airborne bacteria thrive in moist environments, which is why it is commonly found in bathrooms. *Serratia Marcescens* survives when any water sits for a period of time in the open air.

Black, Orange or Green – What Is It?

The appearance of this issue is associated with several factors having to do with moisture but is generally not a problem with water quality. Mold or mildew is common where there is moisture. Bathrooms are especially susceptible which include toilet bowls, showerheads, shower doors or curtains, sink drains, bathtubs, tiles and grout. Most mold or mildew can appear when any water sits for a period of time in the open air.



Mold or Mildew – How To Get Rid Of It



There are several things you can do to prevent the stains from developing. Drying wet surfaces after use will prevent mold and mildew from growing. Get a good toilet bowl cleaner (some may actually be specific for mold and mildew) and squirt around the bowl from the rim of the toilet and let it sit for a little while, using a soft brush, apply light pressure against the bowl surface, swish the water around the bowl and flush. Routine maintenance is the key. Remember to flush any guest or infrequently used toilets on a daily basis to avoid setting a stain. Most cleaners dissolve the ring and are rinsed away the next time the toilet is flushed. Chlorine bleach can also remove the black stain left behind by a ring of mold. Shower curtains and liners - wash them in hot water with a little bleach. For patterned shower curtains, use color-safe bleach. Bathtubs, sinks, drains, faucets, showerheads and other surfaces – if you can keep them wiped down and dry, the formation of mold and mildew may be avoided. Use similar cleaning methods as you would to clean the toilet.

Mineral Deposits – What Is It?



White crusty deposits that may accumulate around the toilet bowl, the end of a faucet or showerhead or appear as water spots come from water rich in the naturally-found calcium or magnesium minerals often referred to as water hardness. Water that is high in alkalinity or silica may also create this accumulation. Unfortunately, this is all too common an occurrence where water sits at a certain level and creates a line or is left to dry at the edge of a spout, faucet, showerhead or on any surface and leaves some crustiness. In the toilet, these deposits are often seen as white to gray-hued bowl rings. Ironically many people observe a guest toilet or toilet used infrequently may have more mineral deposit issues because there is less water flow as the water just sits at that line over a longer period of time between usages. This is a common aesthetic condition and not a water quality issue.

Simply get a good toilet bowl cleaner (some may actually be specific for mineral or hard water deposits) and squirt around the bowl from the rim of the toilet and leave it. Upon your return, using a soft brush, apply light pressure against the bowl surface, swish the water around the bowl and flush. Do this before the reappearance of the ring and stay ahead of any reappearance. Routine maintenance is the key. Remember to flush any guest or infrequently used toilets on a daily basis to avoid setting a stain or deposit. Shower curtains and liners - wash them in hot water with a little bleach. For patterned shower curtains, use color-safe bleach. Bathtubs, sinks, drains, faucets, showerheads and other surfaces – if you can keep them wiped down and dry, the formation of deposits may be avoided. Use similar cleaning methods as you would to clean the toilet.

