Treatment

If you pay for your water from a public source, the purveyor disinfects the water to kill anything that may be harmful to your health. They also regularly flush the piping that carries the water to your home.

- Be sure to inform your water purveyor so they are aware of the issue.
- If your have murky hot water, a simple flush of the water heater will clear out the sediment.
- Install a carbon filter on your tap, such as a Brita filter. This will remove low to moderate hydrogen sulfide levels.
- Install an aerator to add air to your water; this will convert sulfide to sulfate, which has no odor.
- Chlorine can be added to water to convert sulfide into a tasteless form. It can also be used to kill odor-causing *bacteria living in your pipes.*

If you still have questions or concerns, please contact your local water provider.

For more information, visit:

- Healthand-welfare.idaho.gov
- Deq.idaho.gov
- Waterheaterrescue.com
- http://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Eliminate-BAD-Smelling-Hot-Water/
- Cleanwaterstore.com
- Wellowner.org

Idaho Rural Water Association
6065 W Corporal Ln
Boise, ID 83704
(208) 343-7001
www.idahoruralwater.com

IRWA
Commitment to Quality

The Truth About

Odor and Color in Drinking Water

Brought to you by Your Water Utility

The Problems

- Does your drinking water have an unpleasant taste or odor?

- Does it smell like rotten eggs when you turn the tap on?

- Do you have murky or dark water, or stains on your fixtures?

The Causes

There are 2 likely causes:

- Many people don't realize that their water heater is causing a bad odor in their tap water.
- Water heaters can also cause natural minerals to precipitate out of water, causing dark or murky hot water.
- Sometimes unpleasant odors comes from elements found in nature, such as hydrogen sulfide.

Hot or Cold Water?

The first thing you should do is to find out if problem lies in your water heater. If the bad smell or color occurs *only when the hot water is running*, the culprit is likely your water heater.

Water heaters are often turned down to avoid scalding. However, this can allow a certain odor-causing bacteria to thrive. Try turning the water heater up to the recommended temperature (usually 160° F) for eight hours. *Caution: to avoid scalding,* ensure the pressure relief valve is working properly before turning up the temperature.

If that doesn't solve the problem, try replacing the anode with one made of aluminum/zinc alloy. Zinc does not react to form hydrogen sulfide the way magnesium and aluminum does.

Hydrogen Sulfide

Hydrogen sulfide gas is something that occurs naturally and dissolves easily in water. It can also be formed due to chemical reactions in your plumbing, particularly inside your water heater. Hydrogen sulfide is easily identified by a "rotten egg" smell.

If your tap water comes from a well, it is not uncommon for it to have hydrogen sulfide in it. *Hydrogen sulfide is not harmful to consume*. Rest assured, public water systems are required to perform rigorous testing before they distribute water to your house. Water operators take pride in supplying your family with safe water to drink.

However, if odor problems occur in both hot and cold water and have just started recently, the plumbing in your home could have bacteria in it.