

MY WATER APPEARS TO HAVE AN OILY OR RAINBOW SHEEN

LIKELY PROBLEM	HEALTH CONCERN?	OTHER CLUES & CONSIDERATIONS	CONFIRM IT	POSSIBLE FIXES	LICENSE REQUIRED FOR FIX?	STATE FUNDS?	MORE INFO
Iron Bacteria See Iron Bacteria brochure.	No, iron bacteria live off iron in the water. They are a nuisance, but not a threat to your health. There is no drinking water standard for iron bacteria.	Is there slime on the walls of the toilet tank? Is there evidence of iron in your water; for example, red stains on plumbing fixtures or on laundry?	Request a lab test for iron bacteria. Laboratories certified to test for coliform bacteria may also test for iron bacteria. Ask the lab.	Flush system and use more water	No	No	See Bacteriological Contamination of Drinking Water brochure.
				Shock chlorination	No	No	
				Well cleaning	No, but licensed Well Drillers or Pump Installers have the needed equipment.	No	
				Continuous pellet chlorination	Licensed Pump Installers or well owners must install. DNR recommends that license holders install.	No	Requires advance DNR approval. See Pellet Chlorination Application .

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Sulfur Bacteria See Sulfur Bacteria brochure.	No, sulfur bacteria are not a threat to human health and there is no drinking water standard. Hydrogen sulfide gas can be harmful to humans, but not at the levels produced by bacteria in wells.	Sometimes odors are more noticeable after a period of low water use. There are two types of bacteria: sulfur-oxidizing and sulfur-reducing. Hydrogen sulfide gas (produced by sulfur-reducing bacteria) is highly corrosive and can damage plumbing connections, metal piping and well casing. Some sulfur bacteria form deposits that can clog a well screen and pump piping.	Sulfur bacteria samples are difficult to collect and take a long time to analyze. You may wish to have your water tested for iron bacteria instead. Laboratories certified to test for coliform bacteria may also test for iron bacteria. Ask the lab.	Periodic shock chlorination	No, but licensed Well Drillers or Pump Installers have the knowledge and equipment.	No	See Bacteriological Contamination of Drinking Water Wells brochure.
				Increase water heater temperature temporarily and drain tank	No, but do not attempt unless water heater has a pressure relief valve.	No	
				Replace magnesium anode rods in heater with zinc or aluminum rods if the problem appears to be only with the hot water	No, but recommend a licensed plumber .	No	This will reduce, but not eliminate sulfur bacteria.
				Continuous pellet chlorination	Licensed Pump Installers or well owners must install. DNR recommends that license holders install.	No	Requires advance DNR approval. See Pellet Chlorination Application .

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POSSIBLE PROBLEM	HEALTH CONCERN?	OTHER CLUES & CONSIDERATIONS	CONFIRM IT	POSSIBLE FIXES	LICENSE REQUIRED FOR FIX?	STATE FUNDS?	MORE INFO
Fuel Oil or Diesel Fuel See VOCs in Drinking Water brochure.	Yes, if components of fuel oil or diesel oil exceed drinking water standards . See Dept. of Health Fact Sheet for Fuel Oil .	Is there a fuel oil tank or was there a spill nearby? Did the problem start suddenly?	Send a sample to a laboratory certified by DNR to perform gasoline and VOC analyses . Test for gasoline range organics (GRO) or petroleum VOCs.	Install a Dept. of Safety and Professional Services approved water treatment device. Devices are listed under contaminants they will remove.	Yes, treatment devices must be installed by licensed plumbers ; or in some cases may be installed by the owner/occupant of a single family private residence. See plumbing license laws . Be sure the treatment device chosen is capable of removing the level of contaminant you have in your water.	Yes, if drinking water standards are exceeded; eligibility criteria met; and approval received first. See well replacement program .	United States Geological Survey National Ground Water Association Water Systems Council National Sanitation Foundation
				Deepen well casing or drill new well	Yes, licensed Well Drillers	Yes, see above.	Center for Watershed Science and Education, UW-Stevens Point