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**TIPS for HOMEOWNERS #5  
IRON BACTERIA**

**1. What are iron bacteria?**

Iron bacteria are widespread in the environment. They will generally be found in iron water pipes and anywhere else that a combination of dissolved iron and dissolved oxygen is present. Iron bacteria are found in soil, stream, cool surface waters, and shallow aquifers; but even deep wells can be subject to the problems caused by iron bacteria.

**2. What are the indicators of the presence of iron bacteria?**

- a. A white or reddish brown gelatinous slime on well pipes and in the water system.
- b. Sudden iron staining.
- c. Sometimes taste and odor problems.
- d. Water quality deterioration.

**3. What are the effects of iron bacteria?**

1. Pitting and corroding of the plumbing system due to a lowering of the pH of the water.
2. Difficulties in coagulation.
4. Taste and odor problems.
5. Turbidity.
6. Discoloration of the water.

**4. Do iron bacteria have any positive aspects?**

Iron bacteria may produce a biofilm that acts as a primary filtration system to remove iron, manganese, and some nutrients from the water.

**5. What can be done to eliminate this problem?**

Iron bacteria can be killed by chlorinating.