

What Exactly is the Black Slime on Your Faucet?!

Before we get into the exact cause of the gross gunk, let's take a step back and look at what flows from the tap. Along with H₂O, tap water often contains [dissolved minerals](#). Two of these minerals are iron and manganese.

Iron and manganese are both naturally occurring, non-hazardous elements found throughout the earth's crust. As water travels through soil and rock, it can dissolve minerals containing these elements and holds them in solution. Most drinking water contains traces of dissolved iron and manganese. While they don't produce a health risk, elevated iron and manganese concentrations can be a [nuisance](#) in water supplies—producing an [unpleasant taste](#) and [off-putting odor](#). Iron and manganese in drinking water are not known to have any health impacts.

Because iron and manganese are chemically similar, they often create similar aesthetic problems—which includes black film, gunk, or sludge. The sticky, slimy, stinky residue can make itself at home nearly anywhere water flows in your home.

Whether it accumulates in the faucet aerator, around the tub drain, inside the toilet tank, or even [inside your tea kettle](#)—black slime is usually due to bacteria that feeds on oxidized iron and manganese in your water supply.

Is Black Slime on Fixtures Dangerous for Your Health?

There are no federal primary drinking water standards set for either manganese or iron because their presence in drinking water is not associated with health effects, however there are regulations regarding [secondary standards](#) for both. These standards are set to fight nuisance problems (e.g. black slime) and aesthetic issues (i.e. taste, odor, color).

Manganese and Manganese-related Bacteria:

The [U.S. EPA](#) recommends maintaining a manganese concentration at or below 0.05 parts per million (ppm) in drinking water. Neither manganese nor manganese-related bacteria are considered dangerous at the levels that [typically occur in drinking water](#). Manganese exposure from water and food (our largest source of exposure) are not known to have a negative health effect. In fact, manganese is an essential nutrient and is required by the human body in small amounts. Similarly, manganese bacteria is categorized as [non-pathogenic](#). Some evidence does suggest that if manganese is inhaled in high concentrations over time, it can lead to [neurological issues](#)—but this is rare and not caused by drinking water.

See more info at this link:

<https://mytapscore.com/blogs/tips-for-taps/what-s-the-black-gunk-on-my-fixtures#:~:text=Whether%20it%20accumulates%20in%20the,manganese%20in%20your%20water%20supply.>