

The Health of Your Tap Water – Part I

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The good news is that Telluride is at the top of the watershed. Unlike downstream water which has run through all of the water municipalities with its potential waste and agricultural runoff, Telluride water starts out relatively clean.

That being said, we have the added concern of mine tailings to influence our waters. According to local water authorities, the findings are that Telluride area waters can be high in manganese and iron. Brown color stains in your toilet bowl, bathtub or on white laundry items can be evidence of elevated levels of iron and manganese in your water.

In that I often do a hair analysis on my clients, I can concur. Hair analysis testing often reveals elevated manganese levels in my clients here in the Telluride area. Although manganese is a trace element needed by the body, when out of proportion to other minerals in the body, it can create symptoms of iron deficiency, anorexia and neurological symptoms such as a lack of muscle coordination.

More frequently I see test results indicating an elevated copper content. This is often a result of copper piping in the plumbing of the home, especially when soft water systems are also in place. The soft water pulls the copper from the pipes.

Acidic water, which often attains its acidity from the seepage of acid mine waters, also leaches copper from pipes. This can leave a greenish ring on bathroom fixtures. The copper tubing in water coolers and ice-makers are additional culprits. The water that sits in these units can contain high levels of copper.

Copper toxicity is a much overlooked contributor to many health problems including joint issues such as rheumatoid and osteoarthritis, bone fractures, decreased libido, panic attacks, hair loss, elevated cholesterol, dysinsulinism, hypoglycemic, anorexia, fatigue, migraines, allergies, childhood hyperactivity and learning disorders. Whew.

A close friend of mine had a personal experience of copper toxicity. He had been displaying disproportionate anger. After observing one fit of his fury, his best friend a medical doctor in psychiatry suggested that he have his hair tested. Copper toxicity was revealed and his anger dissipated after he removed the copper pipes from the refrigerated sources of water in his new home.

We might be under the illusion that if we drink bottled water that we are safe. The truth is that we inhale minerals and toxins when we shower and bathe as well as eating fruits and vegetables washed in affected water. For example, an added contributor to copper toxicity can be copper sulfate added to swimming pools.

Unfortunately, you cannot always tell if your water is safe by the way it looks, tastes, or smells. It is recommended that if you have a well that you should at

least once in the lifetime of your well check for heavy metals. According to local officials, that chemistry shouldn't change much over time. I suggest also testing your drinking water if there is copper piping in the house. It would be good to rule out imbalance.

Water testing can be expensive as there are hundreds of possible contaminants that could be in your water. The key is to narrow down the list of contaminants to test for based on potential contamination sources in your area and your specific health situation.

To begin your research on the water testing that would fit your needs, here are some places to check out. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (www.cdphe.state.co.us), Grand Junction Labs (970-242-7618) and Aqua MD (www.aquamd.com).

Stay tuned... in part II, I will write to the bacterial and chlorine side of drinking water.

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