

1 Stains and Slimes

Coloured stains and slimes are not present in the mains water supply, but instead develop within properties themselves. Their presence does not indicate a problem with the mains water quality.

Where are they found?

Stains and slimes are most often found in bathrooms; on shower curtains, tile grout, bath sealant, showerheads, sink drains and in toilet bowls etc. They can also be found on the end of taps, in washing machine powder drawers and in jug filters.

What do they look like?

Stains can be **pink, reddish, orange and black** in colour. Slimes tend to be just **black** and algal growths are **green**.

Where does it come from?

Staining is caused by the growth of common bacteria, yeast, fungi or algae.

Bacterium such as *Serratia marcescens* and yeasts such as *Rhodotorula rubra* are found throughout the general environment.

These types of airborne bacteria and yeast thrive in the moist, warm environment found in bathrooms and appear as pink or red stains. They can also colonise bird baths and pets' water bowls.

Fungal growths can appear as black stains or black jelly-like material. The airborne fungal spores thrive in the same environments as the bacteria and yeasts described above, as well as the ends of taps and washing machine powder drawers.

What can I do to remove it?

- Use a household cleaner, disinfectant or bleach solution to kill off the bacteria and spores. All traces of the mould need to be removed, as any remaining material will encourage regrowth.
- Remove any lime scale build-up as this can provide an easier surface for them to grow on.

How can I prevent its regrowth?

- Rinse away any soap products as this can provide a source of food.
- Wipe down wet surfaces and increase air circulation/ventilation. This helps to ensure affected areas are quickly dried out after use.
- Continue to regularly use a household cleaner, disinfectant or bleach solution to kill off the bacteria and spores and prevent limescale build up.
- Minimise the use of aerosols as these too can provide a food source for the mould.

Green algae

To help prevent airborne algal spores from growing, keep jug filters covered and in the fridge away from sunlight. The filtered water should also be replaced every 24hrs and the units cleaned and replaced as instructed.

For further advice and top tips check out the water industry guide 'Looking after water in your home'. Download at: www.seswater.co.uk/WaterInYourHome