

How to Flush Water Pipes in a Home

You may need to flush water pipes in your home for many different reasons. Maybe you have an older home and are concerned about the possibility of lead in your water. Maybe there was trouble with your city's water supply and you have been told you must flush the water pipes before using the water. Or maybe your city's water department has been flushing the water mains, so now your water is rusty. Regardless of the reason, you can complete the task with a few basic steps.

Flushing Cold Water Pipes

- 1) Turn the cold water faucet for your kitchen sink on all the way and let the water run for one to two minutes to flush cold water through the pipes. This is particularly useful to those concerned about lead pipes in the home.
- 2) Do not turn on the hot water until you have flushed the cold water lines. If you do the hot water before the cold has been flushed you may pull more discolored water into your hot water tank needlessly.
- 3) Test the water to be sure it is very cold. This is one way to know the water you are now getting through the faucet has not been sitting in your home's pipes.
- 4) Use the water for cooking or drinking.
- 5) Fill some containers with this safe water for use throughout the day so you do not have to continually flush the pipes.
- 6) Repeat Steps 1 through 4 to flush cold water through your pipes every time water must be used for cooking or drinking when lead is a concern. This is only necessary if six hours or more have gone by since the water has been used.
- 7) Turn on the other cold water faucets one by one, each for one to two minutes, to flush cold water through the remaining pipes. Make sure to flush the outside spigot, refrigerator if yours is connected to water and washing machine. This isn't necessary for lead concerns, but it is useful for those situations when there has been water contamination in the area or for discoloration due to flushing local water mains.

Flushing Hot Water Pipes

- 1) Turn on the hot water faucet at the kitchen sink to begin to flush hot water pipes.
- 2) Run the water for 15 minutes for a 40-gallon tank or 30 minutes for an 80-gallon tank. This should ensure all hot water currently in the hot water tank has been flushed and it will allow for fresh water to be heated. This is useful when there is discolored water or after a period of contaminated water.
- 3) Turn on all other hot water faucets in the home including the washing machine, dish washer, bathroom shower and bathroom sink to flush hot water through those as well. Let these run for a minute or two each to flush hot water lines completely.