

MANAGING ALGAE IN YOUR WATER SUPPLY



For a number of years the Lake Wanaka water supply has been affected by the presence of algae. The algae is not harmful from a health perspective, but has had an effect on water filters, irrigation fittings, new appliances and other equipment. The algae is not noticed at all the properties in Wanaka and no pattern has been found.

Since 2016 algae has been found in build-ups in a small number of water filters around Queenstown that take water from Lake Wakatipu. It has been identified as the same algae that has affected the water system in Wanaka.

THIS IS NOT A HEALTH CONCERN, BUT IF YOU NOTICE A SIGNIFICANT DROP IN WATER PRESSURE AT HOME IT MIGHT PAY TO CHECK AND CLEAN YOUR WATER FILTER.

We're currently working with the Otago Regional Council and their partners to learn more about the naturally occurring algae, what causes it, and what treatment options are available.



'BEFORE and **AFTER'** shots from a water filter in a commercial premises in Queenstown.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE AN ISSUE?

Clogging of filters can lead to a drop in water pressure. Appliances can also experience blocked filters, depending on the size of the filter mesh installed in the appliance.

Most modern appliances have a very fine mesh and can be more prone to blockage.

Commercial properties with a large water connection such as hotels may notice an increase in amount of cleaning required to keep their water filters clean.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

If you have already experienced issues with algae or you are installing modern equipment you might want to consider installing additional filtration.

Appliances and fittings that benefit from having a filter include direct electric and gas water heaters, under bench and bench top filters, dish washers and washing machines and irrigation fittings.

Commercial operations such as breweries, dentists and commercial food premises may also be affected.

Professional plumbers can advise you on the most appropriate solution. A successfully used solution in Wanaka is to install an additional 'pre-filter' such as an Arkal disc filter. This will remove the algae before the supply enters the household.

As with most filters this will still require cleaning once pressure seems to be affected. The process is relatively simple and your plumber can demonstrate how to do this once it is installed.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN CLEANING A FILTER?

Cleaning an Arkal-type filter requires closing the toby valve at the boundary, releasing the pressure by opening a tap briefly then closing the valve on the downstream side of the filter to prevent draining the household system.

The filter cover is then removed and the discs made accessible. The discs are loosened and while covering the filter with a plastic bag remove the discs. The discs are then thoroughly rinsed in clean water then reassembled.

WHAT WILL IT COST?

The cost of a pre-filter will range from \$300 to \$500. You will also need to factor in the cost for your plumber's time.

WHERE IS THE PRE-FILTER INSTALLED?

The preferred location for this type of filter is immediately after the toby at your property boundary ensuring that all of your water supply is kept algae free. It will require an additional valve to be installed after the filter.

An Arkal
Amiad1070 filter

