

# Water from rusted pipes may cause liver damage

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**DRINKING WATER** supplied through ageing and rusted drinking water pipes can result in long term illnesses, including liver damage.

The Delhi Jal Board says that wherever the condition of water pipes is found to be beyond repair, they are replaced. But there are a host of colonies in south Delhi where residents are drinking water supplied through pipes more than 50 years old.

These colonies are Malviya Nagar, Sheikh Sarai, Munirka Village, Hauz Rani Village and Kalkaji. A senior DJB official said all these colonies have drinking water pipe lines that are "old".

"There is a similar problem in other old colonies of Delhi like Chandni Chowk, Paharganj and Nabi Karim in Central Delhi. Patel Nagar also gets water from an

ageing distribution system. The Jal Board has replaced 700 km of old pipelines with new ones in the past three years. This year, around 115 km of new pipelines have been laid. But the problem still exists," the official added.

In fact, the replacement of the pipelines has not been "clean". Two executive engineers were suspended recently for inflating the figure of the total lines replaced. "The length of the lines replaced was much below than what had been claimed," an official said.

The problem with corroded pipes, the official added, is two-fold. One, "encrustation" occurs because of corrosion. Encrustation leads to addition of salts and other such substances to the water.

"Drinking water from pipes where encrustation has occurred is a long term health hazard and can even damage the liver.

"The second problem occurs when encrustation cre-

ates holes in the pipes. As drinking water and sewage pipes run side-by-side, sewage water can easily mix with drinking water leading to faecal contamination," the official added.

Mixing of sewage and drinking water is inevitable because the supply of the latter is not for 24 hours. As soon as the pressure in the water pipes dip, sewage water can seep in from the pipe on the side and accumulate in the clean water pipe. When drinking water supply resumes, it carries the pollutants, largely faecal matter, to the tap in your home.

In many of the colonies mentioned above, the water which flows out of the tap for the first 10 minutes, is often muddy in colour because of the contamination. "This water should not be consumed and should be discarded immediately."

Besides leading to pollution, encrustation also clogs the passage of water through the pipe.