

# Consumers over age 50 should consider steps to cut copper and iron intake

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Copper from home plumbing is one metal that may increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease and other age-related disorders. Credit: Susan Lesch, Wikimedia Commons

With scientific evidence linking high levels of copper and iron to Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, and other age-related disorders, a new report in ACS' *Chemical Research in Toxicology* suggests specific steps that older consumers can take to avoid build up of unhealthy amounts of these metals in their bodies. "This story of copper and iron toxicity, which I think is reaching the level of public health significance, is virtually unknown to the general medical community, to say nothing of complete unawareness of the public," George Brewer states in the report.

The article points out that copper and iron are essential nutrients for life, with high levels actually beneficial to the reproductive health of younger people. After age 50, however, high levels of these metals can damage cells in ways that may contribute to a range of age-related diseases.

"It seems clear that large segments of the population are at risk for toxicities from free copper and free iron, and to me, it seems clear that preventive steps should begin now." The article details those steps for people over age 50, including avoiding vitamin and mineral pills that contain copper and iron; lowering [meat](#) intake; avoiding drinking water from copper pipes; donating blood regularly to reduce [iron](#) levels; and taking [zinc supplements](#) to lower copper levels.

**More information:** "Risks of Copper and Iron Toxicity during Aging in Humans", [pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/tx900338d](https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/tx900338d)

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