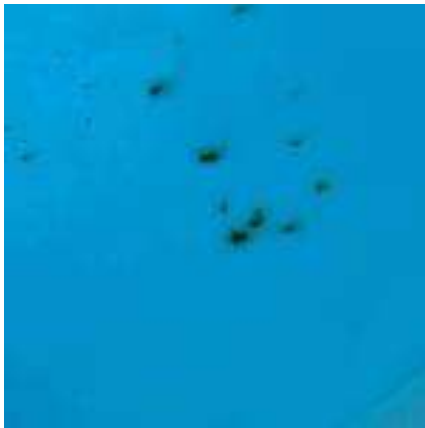


What Causes Cobalt Stains?

Cobalt staining (often called "cobalting") in a fibreglass pool causes small grey, black, or brownish spots that originate from a chemical reaction underneath the gelcoat rather than sitting on the surface.

What Causes Cobalt Stains?



- **Osmosis and Water Penetration:** Pool water seeps through microscopic pinholes in the gelcoat layer.
- **Reaction with Resin:** Water reacts with the cobalt-based catalyst inside the underlying polyester resin.
- **Water Imbalance:** Inaccurate pH, total alkalinity, or high sanitizer levels speed up this process.
- **Blistering:** Tiny osmotic blisters often form around or right next to the discoloured spots.

How to Treat and Manage Cobalt Stains

- **Ascorbic Acid Treatments:** Applying pure vitamin C (ascorbic acid) or specialized stain treatments can temporarily lighten or fade the spots by lifting the oxidized metal compounds.
- **Metal Sequestrants:** Using a dedicated metal sequestering or chelating agent helps bind and control metal activity in the water.
- **Balance Water Chemistry:** Keep pH (7.2–7.6) and total alkalinity (80–120 ppm) strictly balanced to prevent further degradation of the gelcoat.
- **Permanent Refinishing:** Because the reaction happens below the surface laminate, chemical treatments only offer a temporary fix; severe or recurring spots require sanding down the affected gelcoat and professional refinishing.

Watch this short video to see how a simple vitamin C test is used to check if a pool spot reacts like a metal stain:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/JMNcyneY-08>

Your pool shop should be the place for specific and helpful advice and treatment.

