WHY SHOULD I TEST MY WELL?

Private well owners are responsible for regularly testing and maintaining their well. Unwanted substances known as contaminants can get into private well water.

Contaminants in your drinking water may lead to health problems. This makes private well testing important for better health.

Testing is often not required but is encouraged because many contaminants may not cause any change in your water’s taste, color, or smell.

WHAT SHOULD I TEST FOR?

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recommends these tests for common contaminants that can be harmful to human health:

1. Bacteria
   - Test once a year
   - Test any time the well is modified
   - Test any time there is a change in smell, taste, or color

2. Nitrate
   - Test once a year
   - Test before a pregnant person or infant drinks the water

3. Arsenic
   - Test when a new well is installed
   - Test yearly if arsenic was previously detected
   - Test at least once every 5 years

Additional Tests

Additional tests may be recommended for your situation. Please see go.wisc.edu/water-testing for more information.
WHERE CAN I REQUEST A TESTING KIT?

Washburn County UW-Extension
Monday-Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
304 2nd St., Shell Lake, WI 54871
(715) 635-4444

Contact the Washburn County Public Health Department with questions by phone at (715) 635-4400 or email at health@co.washburn.wi.us

What does testing cost?
Homeowners - $60
Includes: Bacteria, Nitrates, pH, alkalinity, hardness, chloride, conductivity and corrosivity index.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE HIGH LEVELS OF CONTAMINANTS?

1. General Questions?
   Contact your local health department with questions about well water quality.

2. Learn About Health Concerns
   Contact: Wisconsin Dept of Health Services
   (608) 266-1120
dhsEnvHealth@wi.gov
https://go.wisc.edu/dhs-private-wells

3. Learn About Mitigation Strategies
   Find more information on filtration and other household water treatment systems at:
   https://go.wisc.edu/mitigation-strategies

   Find a water treatment device for your needs on the National Science Foundation’s Website:
   https://info.nsf.org/Certified/DWTU/

4. Schedule Well Repairs
   If your tests indicated a problem, you may need to contact a well driller or pump installer.

   Find a list of contacts by county here:
   https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Wells/contacts.html

FOR ALL WEBSITE LINKS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:
https://go.wisc.edu/private-wells