



Grant County Health Department

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For Immediate Release-Grant County Health Department **Stay Healthy, Test Your Private Wells**

It's never a bad idea to make sure your family has safe drinking water. If you get your water from a municipal source in Wisconsin it is regulated, monitored, and tested frequently. However, most private wells including those that service single family homes are largely unregulated after installation and often not tested frequently. While most private water wells in Wisconsin provide safe drinking water, some private wells or water systems may become contaminated with bacteria and other contaminants. Therefore, it is important to check your well and test it at least annually for bacteria and nitrate. Your water should also be checked immediately if you notice a change in color, taste, or odor. Be sure to test if your well is topped by flood water or impacted by a spill of chemicals or manure. It is best to avoid drinking your water if you feel it may have become contaminated.

If you have your own well, here are a few things you can check to help make sure that your water remains safe:

- Check to see if you have a secured, screened, vermin proof cap on your well. If not, have one properly installed.
- Make sure your metal well casing extends at least 12" above the surrounding grade. If not, consult with a Licensed Well Driller or Pump Installer and see if your well casing can be extended.
- Do not pitch landscaping toward your well and do not aim or terminate downspouts or other water sources such as sump pump discharges near your well. Wells must be by code at least 8 feet away from gravity building drain and 25 feet away from a pressure pipe or laundry sump.
- Keep hazardous chemicals including pesticides, herbicides, oil, etc. away from your well. Consider not using pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers in your yard, but if you do follow proper instructions. Dispose of chemicals properly.
- Keep in mind that very old or shallow wells may not offer as much protection from contaminants. Old wells that are not being used should be properly abandoned.

The DNR maintains a list of certified laboratories that can test your well and test kits can often be obtained from local health departments. The list of certified labs can be found at:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Wells/documents/PrivateLabs.pdf>

If you find that your well has become contaminated do not drink your water until the water has been properly treated or the problem has been resolved. Have your well and entire system inspected by a Licensed Well Driller or Pump Installer. You may need to disinfect your well, treat your water, or in some cases, install a new well. Be sure to retest your well frequently once the problem is resolved to ensure that you still have safe water. More information can be found at the following link: <https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/DG/DG0003.pdf>

For additional information, contact the Grant County Health Department at 608-723-6416 or visit www.co.grant.wi.gov

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