

Well Testing

Routine Tests. The testing frequencies in this fact sheet are general guidelines. Test more often if you suspect there is a problem with the quality of your drinking water. If any tests give positive results, contact either the state health department or call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline for more information.

- Once each year test for coliform bacteria, nitrate, pH and total dissolved solids (TDS). It is best to test for these contaminants during the spring or summer following a rainy period. These tests should also be conducted after repairing or replacing an old well or pipes, and after installing a new well or pump.
- Every 3 years test for sulfate, chloride, iron, manganese, hardness and corrosion index.
- If your home plumbing contains lead materials, brass fittings or lead solder, test your water as soon as possible. Congress has banned the use of lead in new or replacement plumbing materials.
- If a new baby is expected in the household it is a good idea to test for nitrate in the early months of pregnancy, before bringing the infant home, and again during the first 6 months of the baby's life.
- Residents should advise their doctor, dentist, or pediatrician that they have a private well.

Special Situations. Where you live, or what you live next to, can sometimes affect the quality of your well water. If someone in your family becomes ill, or the taste, odor or color of your water changes, your water supply may be contaminated. The table below lists other situations that deserve attention.

When To Test Your Water	
Conditions or nearby activities	Recommended Test
Recurrent gastro-intestinal illness	Coliform bacteria
Household plumbing contains lead	pH, lead, copperH,
Radon in indoor air or region is radon rich	Radon
Scaly residues, soaps don't lather	Hardness
Water softener needed to treat hardness	Manganese, iron
Stained plumbing fixtures, laundry	Iron, copper, manganese
Objectionable taste or smell	Hydrogen sulfide, corrosion, metals

Water appears cloudy, frothy or colored	Color, detergents
Corrosion of pipes, plumbing	Corrosion, pH, lead
Rapid wear of water treatment equipment	pH, corrosion
Nearby areas of intensive agriculture	Nitrate, pesticides, coliform bacteria
Coal or other mining operation nearby	Metals, pH, corrosion
Gas drilling operation nearby	Chloride, sodium, barium, strontium
Odor of gasoline or fuel oil, and near gas station or buried fuel tanks	Volatile organic compounds (VOC)
Dump, junkyard, landfill, factory or dry-cleaning operation nearby	VOC, Total dissolved solids (TDA), pH, sulfate, chloride, metals
Salty taste and seawater, or a heavily salted roadway nearby	Chloride, TDS, sodium