

HOME WATER TESTING

SHOULD I HAVE MY WATER TESTED?

The answer to this question depends on several factors. It concerns your health and the health of your family, so you need to know some basic facts. In addition to illness, a variety of less serious problems such as taste, color, odor and staining of clothes or fixtures are signs of possible water quality problems. Other things to think about include the nearness of your water well to septic systems and the composition of your home's plumbing materials.



The following items will help you determine when to test your private drinking water supply:

How frequently should I test?

Test water every year for total coliform bacteria, nitrates, total dissolved solids and pH levels, especially if you have a new well, or have replaced or repaired pipes, pumps or the well casing.

Do you expect to have a new baby in the household?

Test for nitrates in the early months of a pregnancy, before bringing an infant home, and again during the first six months of the baby's life. It is best to test for nitrate during the spring or summer following a rainy period.

Do you have taste, odor and staining issues?

Test for sulfate, chloride, iron, manganese, hardness and corrosion every three years. If you suspect other contaminants, test for these also.

Have you had a chemical or fuel spill or leak near your water supply?

Test your well for chemical contaminants, such as volatile organic compounds. Tests can be expensive; limit them to possible problems specific to your situation. Local experts can tell you about possible impurities in your area.

Is someone in your household pregnant or nursing an infant? Are there unexplained illnesses in your family?

Do you notice a change in water taste, odor, color or clarity? You may need to test more than once a year.

Do you know who can test your water?

Reach out to a State certified laboratory to help you test for bacteria or nitrates.

You can find one in your area by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791 or visiting www.epa.gov/safewater/labs.



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