

For more information about groundwater, private wells and well water testing, visit the Florida Department of Health's private well owner information website at www.myfloridaeh.com/water or call your local county health department.



are you "well" aware?

Do you know what's in the water that comes from your household well?

Do you know if your water is "well"?

If not, there is one sure way to find out.

Have your well water tested at least once a year for bacteria and nitrate.



what every well owner should know

Living in Florida, we are fortunate to have a large source of groundwater. Groundwater fills the cracks and pores in sand, soil and the rocks that lie beneath the surface of the earth, much like water fills a sponge. These water-filled layers of earth are called aquifers, and they are Florida's main source of drinking water. Most groundwater is naturally clean and free of contaminants. Unfortunately, Florida's aquifers can become contaminated by chemicals and bacteria that can cause illness and disease. Bacteria and nitrates can reach the groundwater through poorly maintained septic systems, nearby livestock areas and farm lands, poorly built wells, and as a result of flooding. Dangerous chemicals can enter into the groundwater from leaking gasoline storage tanks, over-use of pesticides, landfills, improper dumping of hazardous wastes and storm water run-off. In fact, there are over 31,000 areas of known groundwater contamination in Florida.

As a private well owner, you should be aware of the possible risks to your household water supply.



are myths keeping you from getting your well tested?

Here are some common myths we've busted to give you the facts and encourage you to have your well tested today. Remember, testing is the only way to know for sure that the water you are drinking from your well is safe.

MYTH: I haven't seen, smelled or tasted anything bad in my well water, so it must be safe to drink.

FACT: You can't tell from appearance, smell and taste alone. Most harmful contaminants have no taste or smell. Bacteria and other germs can cause illnesses with symptoms including diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. Nitrate can be especially harmful to fetuses and babies six months and younger, causing blue baby disease.

MYTH: Nobody's gotten sick from my well water, so it must be safe to drink.

FACT: Just because nobody has gotten sick, doesn't mean your well water is safe. Some contaminants can take many years to make you sick. It's important to test your well water now and at least once a year, as this is the best way to make sure your well water is safe for you and your family.

MYTH: My well passed inspection and a water test when it was first built, so it must be safe to drink.

FACT: Well water quality can change over time, so it's smart to test the water on a regular basis, or whenever you notice a change in the water.

Contact your county health department today for suggested tests, sampling instructions and prices. If problems are found, your county health department may be able to suggest quick and affordable solutions.

MYTH: Private well water is safer than public water since it comes from a natural source.

FACT: Public water (city, county, or municipal) is routinely monitored and tested by state officials and utility personnel. If a problem is discovered by a public water system, they will take action to fix the problem. However, testing of YOUR private household well is YOUR responsibility.

MYTH: Testing is too expensive.

FACT: Actually, testing for bacteria and nitrate is fairly affordable. Most prices range from only \$20 to \$70 total if you collect the samples yourself and bring them to a laboratory or about \$50 to \$100 if you want a professional to collect the samples for you. In either case, that's way less than the average cost for a year of public water. Testing every year is the best way to make sure that your well water remains safe for drinking and to help prevent larger and more expensive problems in the future.

well owner checklist

DO:

Have your well water tested once a year for bacteria and nitrate.

Ask your county health department if they recommend testing for other contaminants.

Use only a state certified laboratory to make sure that your test results are valid.

Make sure your well's sanitary seal is intact and water-tight (if your well is designed to have one).

Routinely check your well head and aboveground pipes for cracks, leaks and corrosion.

If your well head is underground, mark the location with a permanent stake or an aboveground marker.

Keep the area around your well clean, clear and well-maintained.

Make sure unused wells are tightly capped or sealed until properly abandoned by a licensed well contractor.

Maintain equipment such as water softeners and iron filters according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Have your septic tank pumped and inspected every three to five years.

Keep a log of all inspections and tests on your well and septic system.

DON'T:

Don't pour poisonous chemicals down household drains.

Don't pour used car oil or other chemicals on the ground.

Don't mix or store pesticides, fertilizers, fuels or other chemicals near your well.

Don't drain water softener or washing machine wastewater near your well.

Don't dump any type of wastes in dry or abandoned wells.

Don't let rainfall puddle around your well.

Don't dig near your underground water lines.

Don't buy water treatment equipment unless your test results indicate problems with your water.

Don't forget to have your well water tested every year!!!



Visit www.myfloridaeh.com/water for more information.