



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
GREEN COUNTY



Annual Drinking Water Testing & Education Program

When was the last time you had your drinking well water tested?

The Towns of Brooklyn and Mt. Pleasant in cooperation with Extension Green County, are offering a drinking water testing and education program. We are making it convenient for you to test your well water and learn about potential health concerns and techniques to keep your drinking water safe for your family. It is easy to participate!

- 1. Choose one, two, or all three of the test options** that are explained in detail in this flier.
- 2. Pick up and pay for your drinking water testing bottle(s)** at the time/location most convenient for you on Wednesday, May 18th, Thursday, May 19th, or Friday, May 20th or Saturday, May 21st, 2022. Participation in this program will be available on a “first come, first serve” basis. Make checks payable to: Green County UW-Extension.
- 3. Drop off your water sample(s)** on Monday, May 23rd, at the same site where you picked up the empty bottle(s).
- 4. Test Results will be mailed** before Thursday, July 7th, 2022 when you can participate in an educational program that will help you understand your test results. The educational program is designed to help you interpret your results and learn about the quality of your area’s groundwater and what you can do to keep your water safe. Experts will be on hand to answer your drinking water and groundwater questions.

This is an educational program only, designed to help well owners learn more about the quality of their drinking water. Individual test results are not reported to any regulatory agency.

(Over)

An EEO/AA employer, the University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, and ADA requirements.

Available Drinking Water Tests

Homeowner Package (\$60)

Includes tests for nitrate, coliform bacteria, pH, alkalinity, hardness, conductivity, corrosivity, and chloride.

- **Bacteria** - Coliform bacteria test is used to indicate the sanitary condition of your water supply system. The presence of coliform bacteria in a water sample indicates a potential pathway for bacteria, viruses, and parasites from human or animal waste that can cause disease. Well owners are encouraged to perform this test annually, or any time you notice a sudden change in taste, color, or odor.
- **Nitrate** - Infants less than six months of age and pregnant mothers should not drink water containing more than 10 parts per million nitrate-nitrogen because of concerns related to methemoglobinemia, a potentially fatal condition that reduces the amount of oxygen in the blood of infants. The source of nitrate contamination is generally fertilizers, septic sewers, and manure. Because nitrate moves readily through soil and groundwater, elevated levels may also indicate the presence of other contaminants.

Metals Package (\$57)

Includes tests for arsenic, lead, copper, iron, zinc, calcium, magnesium, manganese, sodium, sulfate, and potassium.

- **Arsenic** - Water flowing through geologic materials that contain arsenic can sometimes dissolve levels that are a concern for human health.
- **Lead & Copper** - Lead and copper can be leached into the water from copper pipes or lead solder (typically used in pre-1985 plumbing).
- **Iron** - This is a naturally occurring trace mineral. While not a health concern, it causes taste and color problems.
- **Zinc** - A trace metal that is toxic in elevated concentrations, zinc comes from corrosion of galvanized plumbing or water tanks.

Triazine-Type Pesticide Screen (\$35)

If your well is located within 1/4 mile of a corn, soybean, or vegetable field or within 1/4 mile of where pesticides are manufactured, stored, mixed, or loaded into application equipment, you should consider testing your well for pesticides.

- **Diaminochlorotriazine (DACT) Screen** - Atrazine is a commonly applied pesticide used to control weeds in corn fields and has been found in Wisconsin's groundwater. The DACT screen helps homeowners understand the likelihood that water exceeds health-based groundwater standards for atrazine and other triazine-type pesticides. It is a good first indicator of pesticide contamination in wells and can help you decide whether additional pesticides may also be a concern.

Get all three for \$146 -- a savings of \$6

Questions?

Contact Victoria Solomon, Community Resource Development Educator with Extension Green County at (608) 328-9440 or Victoria.Solomon@wisc.edu for more information.

What if your water test indicates a problem?

While most residential wells in Wisconsin provide suitable water for drinking and cooking, sometimes tests do indicate problems. The solutions to those problems vary, but in most cases there are simple steps that can be taken to correct the problem.

For instance, coliform bacteria is the most common problem found in residential wells. If a sample comes back positive for coliform bacteria homeowners can inspect the well system for conditions such as a nearby unused well that should be filled and sealed, a loose well cap, or a cracked well casing. Sometimes a simple well disinfection procedure will eliminate the problem.

Nitrate is another common contaminant found in groundwater. Infants less than 6 months of age and women who are pregnant should avoid drinking water with nitrate levels over 10 mg/L of nitrate/nitrogen. Some people with elevated levels of nitrate simply choose to use bottled water, while many others have chosen to install a water treatment device. Additionally, reverse osmosis is a popular method that effectively reduces nitrate concentrations.

If any problems are detected, we will do our best to help you understand all your options and decide on your next steps.