

WATER TESTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Contaminant	Which Wells or Homes Should Be Tested?	How Often Should I Test?	Health Effects
Arsenic	Arsenic occurs at low levels in soil and bedrock, but has been found at levels above drinking water standards in wells in northeastern Wisconsin.	Consult with PHMDC or DNR on whether to test.	Exposure to arsenic at high levels can result in <i>nervous and digestive system problems</i> . Long-term exposure to arsenic has been linked to <i>skin cancer</i> .
Coliform Bacteria and E. coli	Private Wells	Once every year, or when there is a change in taste, color or odor.	Most coliform bacteria do not cause illness, but indicate a breach in the water system. However, since <i>E. coli</i> are found in fecal material, they are often present with bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause flu-like symptoms such as <i>nausea, vomiting, fever and diarrhea</i> .
Copper	Homes most at risk have new copper plumbing or naturally soft water. If water is used to prepare infant formula.	At least once if meet criteria. Follow up testing recommended if safe drinking water guidelines are exceeded. Homes with new copper plumbing should be retested in 6 months.	Symptoms caused by excessive copper exposure include <i>stomach upsets, abdominal cramping, diarrhea and headaches</i> . Copper is also very toxic to fish, avoid using water containing high levels of copper to fill aquariums.
Fluoride	Private wells used by infants and preschool aged children.	Test when an infant is born and as recommended by your child's doctor or dentist.	Small amounts are found naturally in groundwater. Added to municipal drinking water to prevent dental cavities.
Lead	If you live in a home built before 1930 or your home had copper plumbing installed before 1985.	At least once if meet criteria. Follow up testing recommended if safe drinking water guidelines are exceeded.	Chronic exposure to lead can <i>damage the brain, kidneys, nervous system, and red blood cells</i> . Preschool-aged children are particularly sensitive to the toxic effects of lead. Exposure during pregnancy can affect the developing fetus.
Manganese	Private wells and municipal customers.	If your well or water utility has not recently flushed lines and your water is cloudy or discolored.	Long term exposure to high levels of manganese may cause <i>neurological problems</i>
Nitrate/Nitrite	Private wells within ¼ mile of fertilized fields such as corn, soybean or vegetable. Private wells near animal feed lots or manure storage areas. Private wells used by pregnant women and infants Wells that had levels close to 10 ppm	Everyone should have their water tested at least once for nitrate. When a well is newly constructed or there is no testing history. Annual follow up testing is recommended for any private wells that meet testing criteria.	Responsible for <i>methemoglobinemia</i> or " <i>blue-baby</i> " syndrome when found at high levels in drinking water.
Other Heavy Metals	Private wells and municipal customers.	If your well or water utility has not recently flushed lines and your water is cloudy or discolored.	The effects of metals in water range from beneficial to dangerously toxic. Some metals may be either beneficial or toxic, depending on concentration.