

WATER TESTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Contaminant	When Should I Test my Water?	How Often Should I Test?	Health Effects
Arsenic	Arsenic occurs naturally at low levels in soil and bedrock (detected at elevated levels in wells in northeastern Wisconsin). Consult with PHMDC or DNR on whether to test.		High level arsenic exposure can result in <i>nervous and digestive system problems</i> . Long-term exposure to arsenic can be linked to <i>skin cancer</i> .
Coliform Bacteria and E. coli	Private wells Municipal Customers	Once every year or when there is a change in taste, color or odor. Consult with your local water utility	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 often occur with other 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. Water should be tested if it is used to prepare infant formula.	Test at least once. Follow-up testing recommended every six months if safe drinking water guidelines are ever exceeded.	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. It is typically 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 1986.	Test at least once in this situation. 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.	Test if your water is cloudy or discolored. Check with your water utility to determine if your lines have been recently flushed	Long term exposure to high levels of manganese may cause <i>neurological problems</i>
Nitrate/Nitrite	Test private wells within ¼ mile of fertilized fields such as corn, soybean or vegetable. Also test private wells near animal feed lots or manure storage areas. Private wells used by pregnant women and infants Wells that previously had levels close to 10 ppm	Everyone should have their water tested at least once for nitrate. Test 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.	Health risk particularly for infants and pregnant women. Responsible for <i>methemoglobinemia or "blue-baby" syndrome</i> when found at high levels in drinking water.
Heavy Metals	Private wells	Test if your well has not been recently flushed and if your water is cloudy or discolored. Call PHMDC for details.	The effects of metals in water range from beneficial to dangerously toxic. Some metals may be either beneficial or toxic, depending on concentration.
Pesticides	Test private wells for pesticides if located near pesticide factory or area of heavy use	Test every 5 years (contact PHMDC for specific consultation)	Pesticides such as atrazine can affect reproductive health and may damage the liver, kidney or heart.

For questions related to volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as petroleum or hydrocarbons, call PHMDC at (608) 266-4821. To find water test results of your municipal water go to [http://prodoasext.dnr.wi.gov/inter1/pws2\\$.startup](http://prodoasext.dnr.wi.gov/inter1/pws2$.startup)