

PHMDC LAB TESTING AND PRICES:

Annual Private Well Testing

Nitrate/Nitrite, Coliform, *E. Coli*, & plate count.....\$45.00

Bacteria – Coliform and Plate Count

One Test..... \$16.00
Both Tests..... \$25.00

Non-Metals

First Sample..... \$20.00
Each Additional..... \$10.00
✓ Chloride
✓ Fluoride
✓ Nitrate & Nitrite (one test)
✓ Sulfate

Pesticide Screening..... \$25.00

Metals

First Test..... \$25.00
Each Additional \$15.00

Common Metals Include:

- ✓ Arsenic
- ✓ Copper
- ✓ Hardness
- ✓ Iron
- ✓ Lead
- ✓ Manganese
- ✓ Sodium
- ✓ Zinc



Lead in Paint..... \$20.00

**Other testing options are available.
Contact us for additional information.**

**210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room 516B,
Madison, WI 53703**

**Lab Phone: (608) 243-0357
Monday–Thursday 8:00 am–4:00 pm**

YOUR DRINKING WATER: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



 **Public Health**
MADISON & DANE COUNTY

Healthy people and places

210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Rm. 507
Madison, WI 53703-3346
Phone (608) 266-4821
www.publichealthmdc.com

DRINKING WATER SAFETY



We expect our tap water to be clean and safe—and in Dane County it almost always is. But there are occasional problems. Private wells are sometimes contaminated. On rare occasions, public water utilities have a problem. Sometimes there are malfunctions with plumbing, sewer, and septic systems. Bottled water also sometimes has problems.

The purpose of this brochure is to give information on safe drinking water. The Public Health lab is available to private well owners and others who would like professional help on appropriate types of testing, determining what the testing results mean, and determining how to respond to problems that come up.

FLUORIDE

A small amount of fluoride helps keep teeth healthy, but too much can be harmful. Many public water utilities in Dane County add tightly controlled levels of fluoride to their drinking water. Private wells often have too little fluoride, so fluoride supplements are generally recommended for children drinking private well water because it can significantly reduce the number of cavities they get.



Free fluoride tablets for qualifying children may be obtained through Public Health. For information, call (608) 242-6529.

PRIVATE WELL USERS

Most private wells are relatively shallow and can be contaminated by fertilizers and other agricultural or industrial chemicals. Nitrates from fertilizers are particularly hazardous to infants and pregnant women. Wells are also at risk for contamination from animal waste run off and in-ground septic systems. The bacterial contamination can cause diarrhea, cramping and vomiting.



Private wells should be tested yearly, particularly in households with pregnant women, infants or young children.

Fluoride supplements are generally recommended for any children drinking private well water because fluoride helps to keep teeth healthy and significantly reduces cavities.

PUBLIC WATER UTILITY USERS

There are 34 public water utilities in Dane County. They all conduct extensive testing to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Normal cleaning and maintenance includes necessary routine flushing of water mains. This can result in temporarily cloudy or discolored water which should clear up after a few minutes of running the faucet and does not necessarily indicate a need for testing.

NITRATE

Nitrates from fertilizers, manure, and septic systems can contaminate drinking water. High nitrate levels are most dangerous to pregnant or breastfeeding mothers and infants since nitrates decrease the capacity of blood to carry oxygen. All private wells should be tested for nitrates every year. Nitrate levels between 2 and 10 ppm (parts per million) may suggest the need for more frequent, seasonal testing.



LEAD

Homes built before 1930 may have lead pipes and service lines. In addition, lead solder was used in the installation and repair of brass fixtures until it was banned in 1986. The lead that is released into drinking water poses a risk, particularly for infants. In homes with lead plumbing, it is safest to run the tap for a few minutes to flush out any lead that may have settled in the pipes. When making infant formula, do not use hot tap water or boil the water for more than a minute so that lead or other minerals do not become more concentrated in the water.

In 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lowered the allowable lead levels in drinking water from 50 ppb (parts per billion) to 15 ppb, emphasizing the need for ongoing water testing.

BUT LEAD ISN'T ONLY FOUND IN WATER

Children between six months and six years of age are at the highest risk for lead poisoning, especially when living or spending time in a home built before 1976 when lead based paints were commonly used.



Chipping paint and dust from the paint are risks for small children who play on the floor where lead paint chips and dust may have fallen. Paints or plastics on toys may contain traces of lead and other metals. Since small children put fingers and toys into their mouths, chew on painted railings and windowsills, and can eat dirt and paint chips, it is strongly recommended that you talk to your doctor about having your child tested at ages 1 and 2 years old if they are at risk of lead poisoning.

IS BOTTLED WATER SAFE FOR MY KIDS?

BOTTLED WATER

Bottled water has much lower purity standards than tap water. There are no FDA requirements to monitor the quality of bottled water, although the industry has a "Bottled Water Self-regulation" Program. The water from a single brand may come from multiple locations—about 40 percent comes from municipal tap water. **About 33 percent of bottled water contains significant contaminants.**



MUNICIPAL WATER

In comparison to bottled water, the U.S. EPA regulates municipal water quality under the Safe Drinking Water Act which means that **tap water is under much stricter purity standards than bottled water.** Rigorous and frequent testing is required. Municipal water is much cheaper, too. For the price of one 16 ounce bottle, you can buy 900 gallons of tap water!



MICROBES

Drinking water that is contaminated by bacteria, viruses, and protozoa can cause intestinal illness ranging from mild to serious. Although most public water utilities in Dane County disinfect drinking water, this is not usually done with private well water. On rare occasions, serious problems can occur with municipal water, such as in 1993 in Milwaukee when 400,000 people became ill and 69 people died when a water purification plant failure allowed the protozoa *Cryptosporidia* to enter the system. Drinking water systems in new buildings can become contaminated if they are not adequately protected and disinfected during construction.



OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH RESOURCES:

WIC: Women, Infants and Children

Nutrition Program: 267-1111

WIC provides nutrition and breastfeeding education and vouchers for nutritious food for eligible pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women and children up to age 5. Eligibility guidelines are based on income.

Perinatal Services: 266-4821

This program provides support and services for pregnant women.

Breastfeeding Education and

Support: 243-0449

This program offers free classes for pregnant women as well as individual consultation before and after your baby is born.

Wisconsin Well-Woman Program:

242-6392

Well Woman offers free breast and cervical cancer screenings for income eligible women ages 35-64 who have little or no insurance. There are 25 clinics to choose from.

Oral Health: 266-4821

Children's Dental Health Program is for children 4-18 years of age who do not have Medical Assistance or dental insurance. Eligibility is based on income guidelines. Dental Sealant information is also available.

Free fluoride tablets for qualifying children

may be obtained through the PHMDC Oral Health Program. For more information and to register, call **(608) 242-6529.**