## **Bacteria in Private Well Water**

#### Bacteria is a common contaminant in Wisconsin wells.

Bacteria testing looks for signs that the water can make people sick.

- Total coliform bacteria show the well is vulnerable to germs.
- *E. coli* bacteria show the well is affected by human or animal waste.

#### Test your well for bacteria regularly.



Test at least once a year.\*

Test right away if your water's color, taste, or smell changes.\*

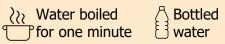


When testing, you should use a Wisconsin certified lab.\*

#### Take action if bacteria are present.

Immediately use a different source of water for drinking, rinsing fruits and vegetables, brushing teeth, and bathing babies.

Options for different water include:



water

Water from a well without issues

Water from a public system

Throw out ice and drinks made with the water.

Use your dishwasher's heated dry or sanitize cycle or wash by hand.\*



Be careful while bathing. Make sure kids do not swallow the water.

Collect a second sample to verify the results.

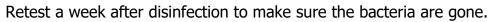
Talk to your health care provider if you or a family member have symptoms that may be related to your water.

## Take additional actions if bacteria are still present.



Continue using the different source of water.

Work with a licensed well professional to disinfect the well.\*



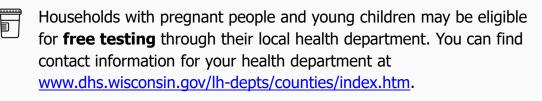
evy If problems continue, you may need to replace your well or install a Sertified treatment device.\*

 $\star$  = Additional information is available in the *Resource Guide* (next page).



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## $\star$ Resource Guide $\star$





If your well has been impacted by **manure**, follow the steps in this resource: <u>www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02952.pdf</u>



If your well has been impacted by **flooding**, follow the steps in this resource: <u>www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02362.pdf</u>

When testing, you should use a **lab** certified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). You can find a list of certified labs at <u>dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/labCert/certified-lab-lists</u>.



Follow the instructions in our *Cleaning with Bleach* guide to **sanitize dishes**: <u>www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p00631d.pdf</u>

The DNR has a list of **licensed well professionals** at <u>dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Wells/contacts.html</u>.

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 The DNR provides grants to help address contamination in private
wells. Learn about eligibility and covered expenses at <u>dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/WellCompensation.html</u>.



The Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) can assist you in finding a certified treatment device if drilling a new well is not an option. Contact them at <u>DSPSSBProductTech@wisconsin.gov</u> or 608-266-2112.



# You should also test for arsenic and nitrate regularly.

You can find information on these and other substances to consider testing for at <u>www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/private.htm</u>.

You can find all this information and more at <u>www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/bacteria.htm</u>.



Questions? Concerns? Contact us at DHSEnvHealth@wi.gov or 608-266-1120.