



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Don't know what's in your H₂O? Test your private well water today!

Eau Claire, WI – September 7, 2021 – To celebrate Protect Your Groundwater Day, the Eau Claire City-County Health Department is announcing **discounted nitrate and bacteria testing for private well samples that are returned to the Eau Claire City-County Health Department before September 16th** (with payment). Individual nitrate and bacteria tests are each eligible for a \$6 discount. A \$12 savings is available when both tests are returned at the same time. Water testing is FREE for homes with a private well and pregnant woman or child under 1 year old.

Nearly 1 in 4 Eau Claire County residents rely on private well water for drinking water, and it's up to each of us to protect this important resource. While city water systems are tested regularly, private well owners are responsible for regularly testing their water. Well checkups and testing should be done each year, if there is ever a change in color, taste, or smell, or if there is any work being done on your well.

Why do I need a checkup for my well?

Nitrate and bacteria can enter drinking water through leaky septic systems, runoff from lawns or fields, or when a well becomes cracked or damaged. Safe, clean water is important for drinking, cooking, bathing, and cleaning. In Eau Claire County, and throughout Wisconsin, as many as 1 in 5 wells may be over the safe level of nitrate in water. "We usually see higher levels of nitrate pollution in subdivisions with septic systems and heavily farmed areas of our county," says Matt Steinbach, Environmental Science Division Manager. "Getting your annual well checkup and water test can identify pollution and help protect your drinking water."

How do bacteria or nitrate in water make us sick?

A high level of bacteria in drinking water is unsafe for anyone. Nitrate levels above 10 parts per million are most harmful for pregnant women, unborn babies, and infants. High nitrate levels make it harder for our blood to carry the oxygen our bodies need. Infant formula should never be mixed with water containing high nitrate levels. Nitrate levels above 2 parts per million may also be an indicator of other pollutants in our water, such as bacteria, personal care products from septic systems, or chemicals used on lawns or fields. Boiling water does not remove nitrate.

How do I get a well checkup?

- Pick up a sample bottle from the Eau Claire City-County Health Department. We recommend annual nitrate and bacteria tests.
- Schedule an annual inspection by a local well driller or plumber to check the physical health of your well. Keeping your well in good physical health can help prevent water pollution.

If your drinking water is unsafe:

If your well has unsafe levels of nitrate, bacteria, or other pollutants, the Health Department can recommend more tests or treatment options that can improve the safety of your water.

For more information, visit

<https://wellowner.org/2021/08/protect-your-groundwater-day-september-7-2021/>
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/private/wells/disease/nitrate.html>

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Promoting health and safety for all Eau Claire communities