Eau Claire City-County
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Don't know what's in your H_2O? Discounted well water testing available at the Health Department through Sept. 15

Eau Claire, WI – September 6th, 2022– In celebration of Protect Your Groundwater Day, homeowners can get discounted nitrate and bacteria tests for their private well water samples at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department through September 15.

Nitrate and bacteria tests will be eligible for a $6 discount each during this time period, which adds up to a $12 discount when homeowners return their water sample for both tests to the Health Department (with payment included at drop-off) before September 15. The total for both bacteria and nitrate testing with the discount is $30. Contact the Health Department at 715-839-4718 for more information. Bottles for water samples can be picked up at and returned to the Health Department office. In Eau Claire County, if a home has a private well with a pregnant woman or a child under 1 year old living there, **that home can get a specific panel of water testing done for FREE**.

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. Homeowners should check and test their well water each year (approximately 15 months apart so each year you can see any changes within the different seasons); if there is a change in their water's color, taste, or smell, or if any work is being done on their private well.

How do bacteria or nitrate in water make people sick?
High bacteria levels in drinking water are unsafe for anyone. Nitrate levels above 10 parts per million are most harmful for pregnant women, unborn children, 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 can also indicate 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.

Why should I get my well water tested every year?
Nitrate and bacteria can enter drinking water through leaky septic systems, runoff from lawns or fields, or when a well is cracked or damaged. Getting your well water tested each year will tell you if your well water is safe to drink. 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. "While contamination can come from many different sources, getting your annual well checkup and water test can identify pollution and help protect your drinking water," says Matt Steinbach, Environmental Science Division Manager.

How do I get my well water tested?
- Pick up a sample bottle from the Eau Claire City-County Health Department. We recommend people get nitrate and bacteria tests for their private wells yearly.
- Follow the directions on how to collect the sample, return the sample to the Health Department as soon as possible (or within 24 hours).
- Results for bacteria and nitrate are typically completed in under 48 hours and can be sent to you by mail or email.
- 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, contact the Health Department. Our staff can recommend additional tests or treatment options that can improve the safety of your water.

For more information, visit:
https://wellowner.org/protect-your-groundwater-day/
http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/private/wells/disease/nitrate.html

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Promoting health and safety for all Eau Claire communities