



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Matt Steinbach
Environmental Science Division Manager
715-839-5092
Matt.Steinbach@eauclairecounty.gov

Limited-time discounted well water testing available at the Health Department

Eau Claire – July 25, 2023 – From Tuesday, August 1 through Thursday, August 10, homeowners with private wells can get their well water tested at a discount at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department, in celebration of National Water Quality Month. We accept samples from all counties; you do not need to live in Eau Claire County to use our services.

Our lab offers several well water tests for homeowners. There are two “bundles” of tests that will be discounted Aug. 1-10:

- **Bacteria and nitrate bundle:** \$34 (discounted from \$46). Includes bacteria and nitrate testing. Recommended yearly for all homeowners with private wells. Bacteria or nitrate tests can also be purchased separately for \$17 each.
- **Homeowners PLUS bundle:** \$80 (discounted from \$166). Includes bacteria and nitrate testing, plus testing for metals – lead, copper, arsenic, iron, manganese, and water hardness. Recommended for all homeowners with private wells, especially if you’ve never tested for metals before.

Getting your water tested is simple: Pick up a water sample kit at the Health Department, 720 2nd Ave., Eau Claire during business hours. Follow the directions to fill the kit up at your home. **To get the discounted pricing, return the water sample and your payment to the Health Department between August 1-10 (water samples not accepted on Friday, August 4).** Return the kit as soon as possible, or within 24 hours of collecting your water sample. Your test results will be emailed and/or mailed to you. If you have any questions, call the Health Department at 715-839-4718.

In Eau Claire County, if a household with a pregnant woman or a child under 1 year old living there also has a private well, **that home can get a specific panel of water testing done for FREE.** Call the Health Department for more information.

Why should I get my well water tested every year?

- Homeowners with private wells 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 they notice a change in their water’s color, taste, or smell; or if any work is being done on their private well.

- The Health Department also recommends homeowners have their private wells inspected yearly by a local well driller or plumber to check the physical health of their well. Keeping your well in good condition can help prevent water pollution.
- Nearly one in four Eau Claire County residents rely on private wells for their drinking water, and it's up to all of us to protect this important resource. Although city water systems are tested regularly, private well owners are responsible for regularly testing their 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 at the Health Department.

How can 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 with high nitrate levels. Boiling water does not remove nitrate!

How can metals in water make people sick?

- Arsenic in drinking water can be toxic even at low levels (wells should be tested for arsenic at least once before use, and more often if arsenic has ever been detected).
- Lead and copper can leach from pipes into the water supply and are especially harmful to pregnant women, infants, and young children.
- High levels of manganese can pose a health risk for everyone, but especially infants and people over the age of 50.
- Additionally, copper, manganese, iron, and water hardness can impact the taste of your water and leave stains on appliances or laundry.

If your well water test shows unsafe levels of nitrate, bacteria, or other pollutants:

Please contact the Health Department at 715-839-4718. Our staff can recommend additional tests or treatment options that can improve the safety of your water.

###