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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Limited time discounted well water testing offered at the Health Department**

**Eau Claire – August 29, 2024** – Private well users can get their water tested for nitrate, bacteria, and more at a discounted price at the Health Department this September.

To get prepared, pick up your water sample kit at the department now – those who **return** their water sample to our office between Monday, September 9 and Thursday, September 19 will get a discount on certain tests.

Water testing is available to homeowners, cabin owners or vacation homeowners with private wells from all counties. You don't need to live in Eau Claire County to have your water tested here. Our in-house lab offers several well water tests. Two "bundles" of tests will be discounted September 9-19:

- **Bacteria and nitrate bundle: \$34** (save 32%, normal price \$50). 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** (save 33%, normal price \$120). Includes bacteria and nitrate testing, plus testing for metals – lead, copper, arsenic, iron, manganese, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, nickel, zinc, and water hardness. Recommended for all homeowners with private wells, especially if you've never tested for metals before.

**Getting your water tested is a simple three-step process:**

1. Pick up a water sample kit at the Health Department, 720 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Eau Claire during business hours (Mon-Fri, 8am-4:30pm).
2. Follow the directions to fill the kit up at your home.
3. **To get the discounted pricing, return the water sample and your payment to the Health Department between September 9-19 (water samples are not accepted on Fridays).** Return the kit as soon as possible, or within 24 hours of collecting your water sample. Your test results will be emailed or mailed to you. If you have any questions, call the Health Department at 715-839-2870.

In Eau Claire County, if a household with a pregnant woman or a child under 1 year old living there has a private well, they can get a specific panel of water testing done for free.

### **Why should I get my well water tested every year?**

- 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.
- Private well users 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). They should also test if they notice a change in their water's color, taste, or smell, or if any work is being done on their private well.

“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 everyone.
- 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.
- 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 bacteria, nitrate, or other pollutants:** Please contact the Health Department laboratory at 715-839-2870. Our lab team can recommend tests or treatment options that can improve the safety of your water.

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