

What should I do if my well water is contaminated?

A well water professional should be consulted when you have a contaminated well. Visit wellowner.org to find a well water contractor.

Metals (such as arsenic and lead) and Nitrates can be removed from water by several methods, but installing a **reverse osmosis filtration system** is most common.

Bacteria (coliform and iron/sulfur bacteria) can be removed by full well **disinfection**.

Radon can be removed by adding a **granular activated carbon** system or an air diffuser system. These need to be installed by a professional.

For any installed systems, make sure to follow all manufacturer maintenance schedules.

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Protect Your Health

a guide for **private well** owners in Arizona



GROUNDWATER

supplies water to over 160,000 families in Arizona through private well systems.

Be aware of common groundwater contaminants in your area and **get your well tested** to protect your family from illness.

What are the most common contaminants in Arizona groundwater?

Lead & Arsenic

Lead and arsenic are naturally occurring metals, and mining regions tend to have higher amounts. Water filtered through metal-rich rock can cause health issues.



Bacteria

Bacteria can enter groundwater through leaking septic systems. In areas with high iron, iron-loving bacteria can form biofilms that coat wells.

Nitrates

Nitrate contamination is due to excess fertilizer or poor irrigation practices, or failing septic systems.



Radon

Radon is a natural gas that dissolves in groundwater and escapes in the atmosphere. If the gas gets trapped in a structure, it can exceed health standards.



Groundwater contaminants occur naturally in the environment, but some are the result of human activities, such as incorrect use of fertilizer, malfunctioning septic systems, resource extraction, or chemical spills.

Some may cause **potentially adverse health effects** depending on the concentration, composition of the contaminant, and the amount consumed.

Private well water is **not tested or regulated by any government organizations**, so it is up to individual owners to keep their drinking water safe.

When should I get my well tested? What should I test for?

All new wells

Arsenic and other primary metals, total coliform bacteria, nitrates, total dissolved solids, pH

Once a year

Total coliform bacteria, nitrates, total dissolved solids, pH

Every three years

Arsenic and other primary metals

In addition to the schedule above, test your well when:

There are **known problems** with well water in your area.

If you have found a **high radon concentration** in your home (test the air in your home every 7-10 years), consider testing your water for radon.

You have experienced **problems near your well** (flooding, land disturbances, nearby waste disposal sites).

You notice a change **in water quality** (taste, color, odor).

If anyone in your family has an **unexplained illness**.

Who can test my well water?

Independent laboratories can perform these tests. For a list of current laboratories that are certified for testing well-water samples, contact:

Arizona Office of Licensure and Certification

Phone: (602) 364-0720

Email: envapp@azdhs.gov

