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.

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

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**Office of Environmental Health**
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www.azhealth.gov
**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.

**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, and 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.

**What are the most common contaminants in Arizona groundwater?**

**Arsenic**
Arsenic may be naturally present due to arsenic-containing rocks, which can leach into groundwater. High arsenic levels are found throughout Arizona.

**Bacteria**
Bacteria can be present due to a septic system leak or animal waste. Test water for “total coliform bacteria,” which will indicate the presence of bacteria that can harm human health.

**Fluoride**
Fluoride is present in most water sources from fluoride-rich minerals. It is particularly important to test your well water for fluoride if you have children.

**Nitrates**
Nitrates can be present due to agricultural activities, septic systems, or natural sources. It is particularly important to test your well water for nitrates if you have children.

**Uranium**
Uranium and other radioactive elements exist in groundwater. Uranium is one of the easiest and most inexpensive elements to test for in well water.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All New Wells</th>
<th>Once a Year</th>
<th>Every 5 Years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arsenic</td>
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<td>Bacteria (total coliform)</td>
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<td>Fluoride</td>
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<td>Lead</td>
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<td>Nitrates</td>
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<td>TDS*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uranium</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Total Dissolve Solids

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

There are known problems with well water in your area.

You have experienced problems near your well (flooding, wildfire, 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 test the water from your private well.

For a list of current laboratories certified for testing water samples:

Visit [http://azhealth.gov/labs4h2o](http://azhealth.gov/labs4h2o)

Or call (602) 364-0720