

HOME WELL WATER TESTING FAQ:



1. Who is conducting these well tests, and why do they matter to our community?

As part of efforts to continue looking at all available options for water and wastewater infrastructure in our community, the Vermont Department of Health and RCAP Solutions are partnering to conduct well water tests for free. This offer is provided through the Vermont Village Wastewater Solutions Initiative. The tests normally cost a well owner \$159.

These well tests can give both the project partners and homeowners important information about the status of village water systems. Results from these well tests will help the Health Department get a better understanding of the quality of well water throughout the State, especially in compact village centers where septic systems may be close to drinking water wells and affect the water quality. This testing effort may be the beginning of more regular testing that would be recommended in the village to monitor well water quality as septic systems continue to age.

2. Will information about my drinking water well be shared?

All Vermont certified drinking water laboratories, including the Health Department Laboratory, are required to submit drinking water test results to the Health Department, where it becomes public information. You can call the laboratory and request your test results at any time, but the information is not publicly searchable.

After testing, you will receive your results via email or hard copy. A summary of all the testing conducted will also be created and will include collective data on the overall status of well water, rather than identifying specific properties that may have

an issue. For example, we would be able to say that a certain percentage of tested homes within a community has elevated concentrations of nitrate - which could suggest a potential relationship between septic systems and drinking water quality.

3. How do we plan to use this information?

Testing is the only way of knowing whether contaminants are in your drinking water and if they are affecting the village as a whole. The results will help inform you of your drinking water quality, help identify your village's needs, and help inform state policy and rulemaking to support solutions for community wastewater issues.

The Health Department aggregates water quality test results by town to create maps and tables for drinking water contaminants. The data is published on the Environmental Public Health Tracking portal in a continuing effort to help Vermonters better understand the relationship between their environment and their health.

Personally identifiable information will not be made public. For more information, visit www.healthvermont.gov/tracking.

4. What contaminants are being tested in these well water samples and why?

Vermont groundwater contains naturally occurring chemicals like calcium that can cause hard water and iron that can cause rusty red stains on your laundry. However, most of the chemicals in your water you cannot see, smell or taste, and they can affect your health, such as arsenic and uranium.

It is important to test your private well for contaminants on a regular basis. The Health Department recommends three test kits:

1. Bacteria (total coliform/*E. coli*) - test every year
2. Inorganic chemicals (arsenic, chloride, copper, fluoride, hardness, iron, lead, manganese, nitrate, nitrite, sodium and uranium) - test every five years
3. Gross alpha radiation - test every five years

These three kits will be offered to you for free during this testing event. For more information about water testing and contaminants, visit www.healthvermont.gov/water.

5. If contaminants are found in my drinking water as a result of this test, am I required to take action? Is financial assistance available for water treatment?

To protect you and your family's health, treatment is recommended for any contaminant that is over the standard. The Health Department can help you figure out treatment options. Call 802-863-7233 to talk to Silje Larsen, the Water Resources Engineer at the Health Department.

If you are living in your own single-family home, you are not required to take action. If you are renting out the property, or multiple families live in the home, other rules apply. If you have questions regarding the status of your home, call Silje Larsen for more information.

The Vermont Wastewater and Potable Water Revolving Loan Fund, also known as the On-site Loan Program, is available to certain Vermont residents for the repair or replacement of failed water supply systems. For more information, visit dec.vermont.gov/facilities-engineering/water-financing/on-site-loan

6. Can I give consent to have my drinking water tested as part of the community study, but not receive my well's results?

No. If you choose not to receive your water test results, then the Health Department will not offer you the water testing kits. The Health Department is offering free water testing kits to support the community study, and to protect public health by reducing contaminants in Vermonters' drinking water. If you do not want the test results, we cannot help you reduce chemicals in your water that may cause cancer or other harmful health effects.

7. How does my well get tested? Do I need to be at home?

Your well will be tested by xxx on mm/dd/yyyy.

You do not need to be home when the samples are collected. The testing team will only need to have access to your tap water. Please contact Mark Johnson if you have any questions about this process:

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