

wellcare® information for you about Protecting Your Wellhead

The most visible portion of your drinking water system is the wellhead, the structure built over your well to protect its various parts. By protecting your wellhead, you will ensure the quality of your drinking water supply.

Maintaining Your Wellhead

The wellhead protects the well casing, which is the lining of the well, and the well cap, which provides a tight-fitting seal at the top of the well. The wellhead is your first line of defense to prevent pollutants from penetrating your drinking water system. Inspect your wellhead regularly to make sure these elements are in good condition.

To keep your well safe, hire a licensed water well professional to perform any new well construction or modification, or to close an old well.

Take care when working or mowing around your well. It is easy to damage the wellhead with heavy equipment, which will jeopardize the sanitary protection of your well, permitting contaminants to enter the water supply. Don't pile snow, leaves or other materials around the well, where they can carry pollutants into the system.

When landscaping around your well or siting a new well, make sure the top of the well sits at least one foot above the ground. Slope the ground down and away from your well for proper drainage.

Well Location & Surface Drainage

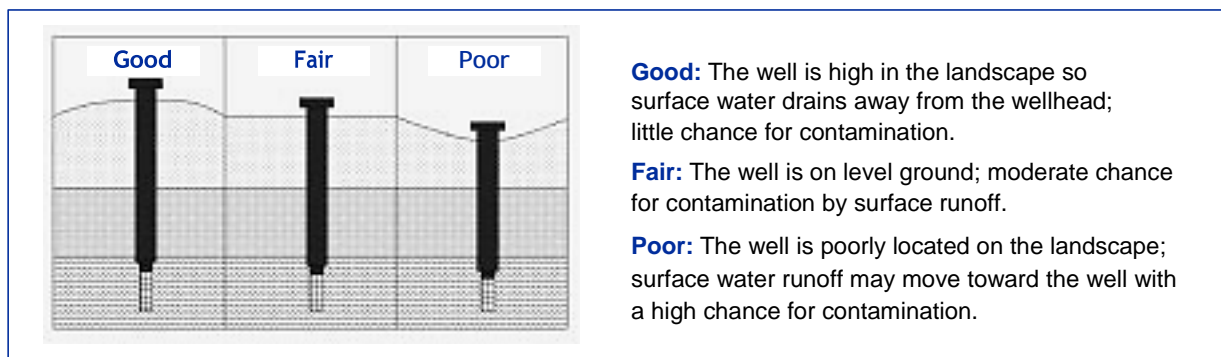


Chart reprinted with permission from *BMPs for Wellhead Protection*, by R.L. Mahler and K.A. Loeffelman, Soil Sciences Division, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho.

Ensure Clean Drinking Water

Some common household activities can actually threaten the quality of your drinking water. Even small spills of pesticides, fertilizers or fuels near your well can seep into the ground and contaminate the water.

Avoid mixing or using pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, degreasers, fuels or other pollutants within 100 feet of your well. When siphoning water for these tasks, be careful to avoid back-flow back into the well system.

Conduct a quick visual check for activities that might threaten to enter your drinking water system at or near the wellhead which may include the following: septic tanks, lateral fields, cesspools, pit privy; chemical storage areas, machinery maintenance areas, waste piles, lagoons, sewers; underground storage tanks for chemicals, fertilizers, or petroleum products, above-ground tanks for chemicals, fertilizers or petroleum products; animal pens or feedlots and manure storage areas.

If your existing well is located near these activities, you may need to test your water quality more often than once a year. Try to move the risky activities away from your well. Check that your well is located on your property according to standards set by the state, county or locality. These regulations are designed to protect the integrity of your water supply.

You should also inspect and pump septic systems on your property as often as recommended by your local health department or septic service, usually at three to five year intervals. Failing septic systems can leach contaminants into the water supply.

For more information on protecting your wellhead

Contact the well contractor who installed your well. Or, find a water well contractor in your area by looking in your local telephone directory. Many states maintain lists of licensed or registered well contractors. Most states also have state water well associations, state well driller associations or state groundwater associations that maintain a list of contractor members. Contact your local or state health department or environmental agency, your state water well or groundwater association or the wellcare® Hotline to find out where you can obtain a list of well contractors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION to help you maintain your well and protect your water supply



wellcare® is a program of the **Water Systems Council (WSC)**. **WSC** is the only national organization solely focused on protecting the health and water supply of the 43 million people nationwide who depend on household wells for their water supply.

This publication is one in a series of **wellcare®** information sheets. There are more than 90 information sheets available **FREE** at www.watersystemscouncil.org.

Well owners and others with questions about wells or groundwater can also contact the **FREE** wellcare® Hotline at 1-888-395-1033 or visit www.wellcarehotline.org.

JOIN THE WELLCARE® WELL OWNERS NETWORK!

By joining the **FREE** **wellcare®** Well Owners Network, you will receive regular information on how to maintain your well and protect your well water.

Contact us at 1-888-395-1033 or visit www.watersystemscouncil.org or www.wellcarehotline.org.