



## YOUR FALL WATER WELL NEWS!

888-395-1033 [wellcare@ Hotline](mailto:wellcare@Hotline)  
[www.wellcarehotline.org](http://www.wellcarehotline.org)

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### Dear Well Owners Network Member,

Time to FALL into groundwater protection! Groundwater is essential to our way of life. We all benefit from groundwater, so let's protect it! This newsletter will help you learn what you can do to protect this necessary resource now and for future generations. As always, if you have questions on any of these topics, the wellcare® Hotline can help. Contact the wellcare® Hotline at 888-395-1033 or [wellcarehotline.org](http://www.wellcarehotline.org).

### IN THIS ISSUE

Water Use Calculator

Protect Your  
Groundwater Day

Your Well &  
Groundwater  
Protection

**September 9, 2014 is**  
**PROTECT YOUR**  
**GROUNDWATER DAY!**



Join the wellcare® Well Owners Network and  
NGWA on September 9th for Protect Your



Become more aware of the importance of using water wisely. Try [this online Water Use Calculator](#).

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**wellcare® Tip:**  
***Preparing for the Cold***

As colder weather sets in, you should make every effort to prevent the risk of your pipes from freezing, which can cause a blockage of your water supply and lead to the breaking of your pipes.

When pipes freeze the flow of the water is completely blocked. As water expands as it turns into ice, the pipes are very likely to burst. This can be an

Groundwater Day! Use this day to begin doing your part by recognizing the importance of protecting one of our most essential natural resources...groundwater! [Learn more](#)

## What You Need to Know About Your Well and Protecting Groundwater

Well maintenance, along with proper location and construction, is necessary to ensuring your drinking water is safe. Contamination of well water supplies generally occurs when polluted surface water or septic system discharges seep into the groundwater. Human activity can also play a role in unnecessary pollution. Practices such as annual checkups, regular testing, and keeping household contaminants and farming chemicals a safe distance from water supplies greatly reduce your risk from drinking potentially unsafe water.

Private well owners are solely responsible for ensuring that their wells are constructed to local and state standards and for testing their water regularly to confirm that it is free of any natural or man-made impurities. Below are some tips for inspecting your well construction and testing your water.

## The Construction of Your Well

Several times a year, you should visually inspect exposed parts of the well making sure there are no cracks, or damage to the well cap or casing. Ensure the area around the wellhead slopes to drain surface runoff away from the well and that it is free of leaves, branches, and other debris.

expensive problem to fix, and a disastrous occurrence in the frigid winter months. Both hot and cold water pipelines alike can freeze, so be sure to protect both.

Begin insulating your pipes before freezing temperatures hit. You can insulate your pipes with foam rubber sleeves or fiberglass insulation, wrapping the insulating material around the pipes. For extra protection in the areas of your home that are not heated, such as crawl space or basement areas, pipes may first be wrapped with special heating strips, and then outer insulation wrapped on top. For assistance contact a licensed plumber in your area.

If your home has faucets that are attached to the outside of your home, you may have a shutoff valve somewhere on the pipe on the interior of your home. Turn off the water at this valve for the duration of the winter. If you do not have this type of valve, consider having one installed before winter. Switch the valve shut, and then open the outside valve to drain

If your well does not have a well cap or sanitary seal, have one installed as soon as possible to prevent unauthorized use of or entry into the well. Never cut off the well casing below the land surface. Your wellhead should be at least 12 inches from the ground surface.

Abandoned and improperly constructed wells can be sources of potentially polluted groundwater, which could make your drinking water unsafe. If you have an abandoned well on your property, contact a water well professional to have it sealed.

***You should always hire a licensed water well professional for any new well construction, modification, abandonment, and closure.***

## ***Testing Your Well Water***

You should test your well water immediately if you have no recent test results or any record of previous tests. It is recommended to test for a minimum of bacteria every year. Also, test annually for nitrates if you live in an agricultural area or have an on-site septic system. You should test your water if you notice any change in the taste, color or odor of your water.

Testing may be needed more than once a year in special situations such as someone in the household is pregnant or nursing, there are unexplained illnesses in the family, your neighbors find a dangerous contaminant in their water, or there is a spill of chemicals or fuels into or near your well.

In addition, it is recommended to test after any flooding in or near the well to determine if flood water carried bacteria or other contaminants into the well system.

***Contact your local health department, cooperative extension office, private testing laboratory, or state environmental agency***

out the remaining water. This will protect the pipes that lead to the outdoors from freezing.

Try to spot any trouble with your pipes before it's too late, keeping an eye out for signs that may signify your pipes are beginning to freeze. For instance, is the water pressure becoming reduced? If you notice this problem prior to cold months this is NOT a sign of pipes freezing.

**Contact your water well professional for assistance.**

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## wellcare® Hotline



**Q: Are there ever times when you have to watch your water consumption so as not to run your well dry? If so, what times of the year does this occur?**

**A:** *Moderate to severe drought conditions are a*

**for other water testing guidelines and for test kits.**

**In addition, Environmental Testing & Research (ETR) Laboratories continues to offer discount water testing kits. Ordering is easy! View details for [ordering online](#) or contact ETR at 800.344.9977. Mention Water Systems Council to receive your discount.**

**For more information on Well Water Testing [click here](#).**

## Water Conservation

Water conservation is becoming an ever-growing necessity throughout the world today as the availability of drinking water constantly diminishes through events such as drought, contamination, and an increase in population. The average home in the US consumes about 80 - 100 gallons of water per person per day. Nearly 14 percent of that water is wasted. Conserving and protecting this limited resource is essential in ensuring an adequate supply of water for all your needs as well as for future generations. Below are some tips on water conservation and protection:

- Check for leaky faucets/toilets and have them fixed.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator for drinking.
- Shut off the water while brushing your teeth and shaving.
- Take shorter showers.
- Run the clothes washer and dishwasher with full loads only.
- Water lawn and plants only as needed. Most established lawns and gardens need just one hour of deep watering once a week to remain healthy.

**For more information on Water Conservation [click here](#).**

fact of life in more than half of the nation. Some utilities and local and state governments have declared mandatory water conservation measures, even for private well owners.

You can find additional information in these wellcare® information sheets: *Water Conservation, What to Do if the Well Runs Dry, and Ground Water Withdrawals.* Read [more](#)

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## Do you have questions about your well?



Contact the **wellcare®** Hotline at **888.395.1033** or [wellcarehotline.org](http://wellcarehotline.org).

## Groundwater Protection

A few more tips to help protect groundwater! Avoid mixing or using pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, degreasers, fuels, and other pollutants near the well. Store these products at least 100 feet from your water well system.

Pump and inspect septic systems as often as recommended by your septic service or local health department. Generally, this should be done every 3-5 years depending on the demand placed on it.

You should never dispose of harsh chemicals, solvents, petroleum products, pesticides or pharmaceuticals down the drain/toilet, in a dry well, or septic system. Take unused portions to a hazardous waste collection site.

*Try using biodegradable or environmentally friendly pesticides and fertilizers. Or check with your local health department or waste management for hazardous waste acceptance sites to dispose of unused products. Oil based paints are accepted at most, but water based paint can be thrown in the garbage once hardened. Many pharmacies offer take-back programs for pharmaceuticals. If there are no disposal options, you can alter the medications to make them undesirable or unusable. Try adding kitty litter, coffee grounds or spices like mustard or turmeric to liquid medications and water to pills. Pharmaceuticals for pets should be handled the same as for humans.*

**For more information on Septic Systems and Properly Disposing of Pesticides and Fertilizers click [here](#).**

*Previous newsletters with additional tips can be found [on our website](#).*

*WSC has over 90 different wellcare® information sheets that can help you and your family learn more about managing a water well and protecting your water supply. Visit our [website](#) or contact the wellcare® Hotline at 888-395-1033.*

STAY CONNECTED

