



888-395-1033 wellcare® Hotline
www.wellcarehotline.org

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Dear Well Owners Network Member:

It's almost fall y'all! That means it is time to prep your water well for the cooler months ahead! We have covered all the details in this newsletter to help you protect and maintain your well system.

So continue reading and as always, if you have questions regarding these topics, if you can't find what you're looking for, or if you have any other questions on wells and well water, the wellcare® Hotline can help! Contact the wellcare® Hotline at 888.395.1033 or www.wellcarehotline.org. We chat live now!

Don't forget to like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) for extra tips, industry news, and more!

PROTECT YOUR GROUNDWATER DAY
has a new theme this year - *Cap It, Plug It!*



There are many ways to protect your water quality when you are a private well owner, but the most important are:

- ~ To make sure your well is properly capped, and
- ~ To properly plug any abandoned wells on your property.

That is why the 2017 theme for Protect Your Groundwater Day is, "Cap It, Plug It!"

Continue reading important information on their [website](#) and [watch the video](#).

Let's keep the theme going!

Protect 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 help ensure the quality of your drinking water supply.

Maintain 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.

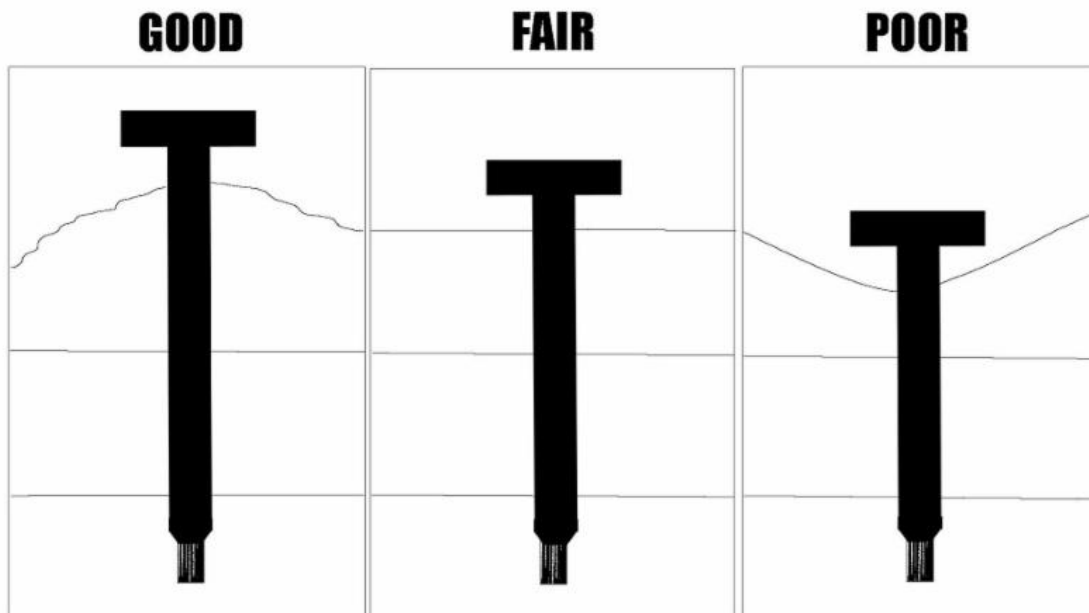
To keep your well safe, hire a licensed water well professional to perform any new well construction or modification, or to close an old well.

Take care when working, mowing, or plowing 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 leaves, snow, or other materials around the well, where they can carry pollutants into the system.

Consider purchasing a fiberglass driveway marker to identify your well's location during fall and winter months.

Well Location & Surface Drainage

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 (see image below).



Good: The well is high in the landscape so surface water drains away from the wellhead; little chance for contamination.

Fair: The well is on level ground; moderate chance for contamination by surface runoff.

Poor: The well is poorly located on the landscape; surface water runoff may move toward the well with a high chance for contamination.

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 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 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.

Test Your 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 warranted 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, there is flooding near your well, or there has been a spill of chemicals or fuels into or near your well.

Contact your local health department, cooperative extension office, private testing laboratory, or state environmental agency for additional water testing guidelines and for test kits.

We also provide a ['Water Testing by State and Province'](#) page that links to each state/province information on well testing including laboratory listings.

Abandoned Wells

Out-of-service wells must be properly closed and sealed. Otherwise, they pose a threat to groundwater quality and a potential safety hazard.

Risks of Abandoned Wells

Normally, groundwater flows through soil and bedrock formations, known as aquifers, which filter unhealthy organisms, minerals and other substances. Water that enters an abandoned well bypasses this purifying action.

Contaminants enter the aquifer through the unsealed well and may eventually harm the water quality in other wells nearby. Contaminants usually get into an abandoned well through the casing pipe. It may not extend high enough above the ground surface to prevent runoff from washing into the old pipe. Or, the well cap could be broken or in poor condition.

Abandoned large diameter, open wells also pose a real threat to children and animals. There have been numerous reports of children being trapped and even drowned in these types of old wells.

Help Finding Lost Wells

Some states require disclosure of old wells whenever the property is sold. But in thousands of cases, the old wells are forgotten. The well may be covered by a parking area or a building. Or, the only evidence might be a depression or an old well casing in the yard close to the house or another outbuilding.

Below are some additional indications of old wells:

- Well casing visible above ground, removable concrete slab, or large hole in basement floor
- Basement offset, a small room off the basement or other additions, under a porch or under steps
- Windmill, typically located directly over the well
- Pit in the yard or basement covered with wood, concrete, or steel
- Waterline or patched hole through the basement floor or wall
- Water system components, such as a pressure tank or pump, or shadow lines on the basement floor or wall, indicating where such components were once located
- Electrical components, such as wiring or a control box
- Low spot in the yard
- Old outbuilding that may once have been a pump house

Check with individuals familiar with the property including: the previous property owners, neighbors, contractors (such as well drillers, pump installers, plumbers, and remodelers) who have worked on the property, inspectors (well, plumbing, building, and septic system) and/or current or former employees and maintenance staff to help determine where old wells were located and if they were sealed.

Your water well professional can use simple tools - shovels or a backhoe - or high tech ones to locate an abandoned well. The latter include: a metal

detector, a tape measure or other tool to follow pipes, and ground penetrating radar to locate buried structures.

Sealing the Well

The only way to safely deal with an abandoned well, new or old, is to seal it properly. Well sealing is a process of permanently and completely filling the well with an approved material, called grout. Some states require that a licensed well contractor conduct the well sealing and file a report with the agency once the work is complete.

The process starts with removal of the pump, the inner pipe to the pump and any material or obstructions in the well. A grout pipe is installed to the bottom of the well's borehole. The grout is pumped to fill the well from the bottom up. The grout usually consists of a special cement like bentonite. In some cases, the contractor may have to remove or perforate the well casing before pumping the grout, to ensure a proper seal.

Different types of wells require different procedures and even special kinds of grout. Your water well professional will advise you on the right steps to safely seal the well. Some states assist landowners with the cost of safely sealing an abandoned well. Contact your local or state health department for more information.

Mark Your Calendar!



SepticSmart Week 2017 is September 18-22!

This annual event focuses on educating homeowners and communities on proper septic system care and maintenance. [Find out about SepticSmart Week.](#)

Join the effort and learn the [Top 10 Ways to Be a Good Septic Owner](#). If you have questions or concerns about your septic system contact your septic service or your local health department and [view our information sheet on Septic Systems](#).

Leaving Your Vacation Home for the Winter?

Protect Your Well from the Cold

As colder weather sets in, you should make every effort to prevent the risk of freezing pipes. Frozen pipes become blocked with ice and as water backs up and freezes they will most likely burst. Both hot and cold water pipes can freeze, so it's best to protect both.

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 a crawl space, basement, or garage; pipes may be wrapped with special heating strips and then wrapped with outer insulation. For assistance, contact a plumber in your area.

In areas where freezing occurs on a regular basis, a pitless adapter can be attached to your well casing to provide a frost-proof seal between the casing and the water line running to your home. This device protects the water from freezing and permits convenient access to the well and well components without having to dig around the well.

Ask your water well professional if your well is equipped with a pitless adapter or if one can be installed in your well. If a pitless adapter can be installed, confirm your water well professional is using an adapter that has been tested to meet industry standards. PAS-97(2017) is an industry standard for pitless adapters. A list of components that meets this standard is available on the [Water Systems Council website](#).

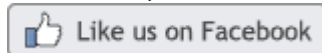
For more information on protecting your well from the cold, contact your water well professional or the [wellcare® Hotline](#).

Coming Soon!

New Brochure: A Quick-Guide for Well Owners



Hear about it first; add us on these Social Networks...



**Do you have questions
about your well or well
water?**

We can help! Contact the wellcare® Hotline
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