



Well Owners Network
wellcare NEWS

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

Winter 2018
Volume 10, Issue 1



Dear Well Owners Network Member:

We want to thank you for continuing your membership as a wellcare® Well Owners Network member and wish you and your family a happy and healthy 2018!

If you have questions regarding the topics in this newsletter, 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!

It's been a busy year.... 2017 At-A-Glance

****Just released**** in December

Winterizing & De-winterizing Your Well information sheet

Most vacation homes and cabins are considered seasonal homes. Some seasonal homes have private water wells that service the home. These types of homes are not designed to be used during the winter because of plumbing systems and structures that are not adequately insulated to withstand extreme cold. When preparing to close your vacation home for the season, leaving the home vacant and unheated, you must winterize the plumbing to protect it from bursting in freezing temperatures. This process includes going through the steps to winterize your water well pump...[Continue reading.](#)

welcare® information for you about Winterizing and De-winterizing Your Well

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QUICK TIPS:

Before you shut off the water supply, save a few gallons of water for drinking or cooking and draw enough extra water to prepare an antifreeze mix that you will need to protect the traps.

Most water heater manufacturers recommend that you drain the sediments that build up in the tank at least once a year. This is a great time to do it. Refer to your water heater manual or contact the manufacturer for recommendations if you are unsure.

Winterizing Your Home

WSC recommends that you contact a licensed plumber to winterize your home. If you must winterize on your own there are some important steps you must take to drain your system efficiently. [Click through the entire list before getting started.](#)

Step 1: Shut off the house water supply by closing the main shut off valve.

Step 2: Turn off the gas or electricity to the boiler and the water heater.

Step 3: Siphon the water out of the tub of the clothes washer. If the drain hose can be lowered to a floor drain, it will usually drain on its own.

Step 4: If you have hot water heat, open the drain faucet on the boiler and let the water flow into the floor drain. Next, remove an air vent from a radiator on the top floor so that air will replace the water as it drains into the boiler.

Step 5: Working floor by floor, starting at the top, open all hot and cold water faucets – including all tubs, showers and outdoor faucets – and flush all toilets.

Step 6: Open the drain faucets on the water heater and the water treatment equipment if you have any. **BE CAREFUL!** Even though you have turned the electricity or gas off, the tank still has hot water in it.

Step 7: Open the drain faucet (if you have one) on the main supply line to release any water that may remain in the pipes.

welcare® information on Winterizing, De-winterizing Your Well December 2017

welcare® information for you about Caring for a Cistern

What is a Cistern?

A cistern is a large tank used to store water. Cisterns can be located either above or below ground, and they come in a range of sizes and shapes with varying features. A below ground cistern can be quite large and tends to be more efficient than an above ground cistern because the surrounding soil provides insulation, reducing the amount of water lost to evaporation. Most cisterns require an additional pump to access water, especially if it is installed below ground.

Cisterns also have a cap or cover to keep animals, plants, and insects away from the water. Many homeowners have cisterns to back up their water well system during dry seasons, and in some cases, a cistern is used as the main source of water for a household. When using a cistern as the main source of water, water can be delivered periodically throughout the year, or supplied by a remote collection system. Some families also treat water from a water supply station set up by their community.

How do I maintain my Cistern?

Just like a well, regular inspections and maintenance are important to keep the cistern in tip top shape and make sure the water is safe.

Water Testing

If the cistern is fed by a water well, follow testing recommendations in our [welcare® information sheet on Well Water Testing](#).

When using a cistern as a main source of water, testing for bacteria twice a year (usually spring and fall) is recommended at a minimum. It is also recommended to test for chlorine, total dissolved solids (TDS), nitrate, and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Your local health department may also have additional recommendations.

Water should be tested immediately if recent test results are not available, there are no records of previous tests, noticeable changes in the taste, color, or odor of your water, or if anyone in the household is pregnant, nursing, or has unexplained illness.

Contact your local health department, cooperative extension service office, state environmental agency or the [welcare® Hotline](#) for other water testing guidelines and help finding a local certified water testing laboratory.

If there is any suspicion of contamination, such as color, taste, or illness, stop drinking or cooking with the water immediately, and do not reuse any well water that has proven the water source to be safe. Always seek the advice of your medical doctor if you have any health concerns. See the [welcare® information sheets](#) on these contaminants on our website at [www.welcarecistern.org](#)

welcare® information on Caring for a Cistern

May 2017

Caring for a Cistern information sheet

Iron Bacteria & Well Water information sheet

wellcare® Information for you about Iron Bacteria & Well Water

What is Iron Bacteria?

Iron bacteria are small living organisms that naturally occur in soil, surface and groundwater. These nuisance bacteria combine iron or manganese with oxygen to form deposits of "rust," bacterial cells, and silty materials that clog to well casings, pumps, pipes, plumbing fixtures, and water appliances often damaging them.

Iron bacteria can be orange, brown, or red in color. Sometimes if floats in the water like orange algae and sometimes you may notice an orange slime that coats the inside the toilet tank that can be wiped off with a finger. You may also notice an oily sheen on the water surface.

Iron bacteria often produce unpleasant tastes and odors commonly reported as: "swampy," "bity," "cucumber," "sewage," "rotten vegetation," or "stinky." The taste or odor may be more noticeable if the water is stagnant for some time. Iron bacteria do not produce hydrogen sulfide, the "rotten egg" smell, but can create an environment where sulfur bacteria can grow and produce hydrogen sulfide.

What are the health effects of Iron Bacteria?

Although iron bacteria can affect how water tastes and smells, there are no associated health risks. However, iron bacteria can clog filters and screens reducing well yield and the effectiveness of some water treatment devices.

If you suspect contamination or experience illness, stop drinking and cooking with the water immediately, and do not resume use until testing has proven it to be safe to use. Always seek the advice of your medical doctor if you have any health concerns.

How do I test for Iron Bacteria?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not set a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for iron bacteria in drinking water. Too much iron bacteria in water will cause the water to be too unpalatable to drink. So if you suspect that you have iron bacteria, contact your state or local health department or the wellcare® hotline for a list of state-certified laboratories in your area that can perform iron bacteria testing. The characteristics listed are typical of iron bacteria. However, objectionable stains, tastes, or odors may be due to other causes including iron, sulfate, hydrogen sulfide, or manganese. Testing for these contaminants is also recommended to determine proper treatment.

What are the treatments for Iron Bacteria in drinking water?

Treatment techniques which may be successful in removing or reducing iron bacteria include physical removal, pasteurization, and chemical treatment. Treatment of heavily infected wells may be difficult, expensive, and only partially successful.

wellcare® Information on Iron Bacteria & Well Water

March 2011

wellcare® Information for you about PFOA and PFOS & Well Water

What are PFOA and PFOS?

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), also known as CA, and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) are manmade organic chemicals of a larger family of chemicals called perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFOA and PFOS have been the most produced and studied from this family of chemicals. They have been used to make water, grease, or stain resistant products including carpets, clothing, furniture fabrics (e.g. Scotchgard™), suitcases (e.g. Telford®), and food packaging. They are also used for firefighting at airfields and other industrial processes.

PFOA and PFOS break down very slowly in the environment. They can enter groundwater through landfills, septic systems, or from a nearby industrial facility where these chemicals were produced or used during manufacturing. Other potential sources of contamination include oil refineries, airfields, and locations where the chemicals were used for firefighting purposes.

What are the health effects of PFOA and PFOS?

Studies indicate that PFOA and PFOS can cause increased cholesterol levels, low infant birth weights, effects on the immune system, cancer for PFOA, and thyroid disruption for PFOS. Additional studies on laboratory animals indicate reproductive and developmental, liver, kidney, and immunological effects.

To protect the general public, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a health advisory level for PFOA and PFOS in drinking water of 70 parts per billion (ppb), which is equivalent to 0.0007 micrograms per liter (µg/L). When both PFOA and PFOS are found in drinking water, the ~~combined~~ levels should be compared to the health advisory level of 70 ppb. Some states may have recommended levels even lower than those provided by EPA. Check with your state environmental agency for more information.

Since PFOA and PFOS have been used in an array of consumer products, most people have been exposed to low levels.

If you suspect contamination or experience illness, stop drinking or cooking with the water immediately and do not resume use until testing has proven it to be safe. Always seek the advice of your medical doctor if you have any health concerns.

How do I test for PFOA and PFOS?

There is no taste, smell, or color associated with PFOA and PFOS. So the only way to know if your water is contaminated with these chemicals is to have your water tested. Testing for these chemicals can be expensive, but should be performed especially in areas near manufacturing facilities. Contact your state or local health department for a list of state-certified laboratories in your area.

wellcare® Information on PFOA and PFOS & Well Water

October 2010

PFOA and PFOS & Well Water information sheet

Sediment & Well Water information sheet

wellcare® information for you about Sediment & Well Water

What is Sediment?

Sediments are naturally occurring particles that develop as earth materials are broken down through weathering and erosion. Sediment can consist of sand, rocks, and minerals, or may consist of organic particles of plants and animals. Sediments may appear in well water as color or cloudiness which may or may not settle on the bottom of container. This type of sediment is called suspended solids. Additionally, some sediment develops from clear well water only after it is exposed to air. This type of sediment is called dissolved solids.

What are the effects of Sediment?

Sediment can affect the quality of water in a number of ways. Besides an unpleasant look, the sediment in the water can clog pipes, plumbing, pumps, and water appliances or even create clogs throughout the water system to reduce the flow of water. Additionally, health risks posed by sediment in drinking water are from pollutants and pathogens that can attach themselves to sediment particles entering your water supply. Potential health contaminants include microbes such as bacteria, virus, and protozoa; from pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides; and from dissolved metals like mercury, lead, and arsenic.

Sources of Sediment

Sediment can enter your water supply from a number of sources:

- Sediment from the drilling process may remain in recently drilled wells. It can take up to 30 days after a well is drilled and the water is used on a daily basis before the well settles and sediments are gone.
- Older wells, or wells drilled in loose bedrock, may experience sediment piling up at the bottom of a well, which might then be pumped into the plumbing system.
- Damaged or degraded well components, including casing, screens, and seals can create pathways that allow sediments to enter the well.
- Dissolved minerals, like calcium or magnesium (hardness), iron or manganese can precipitate out and develop into a visible scale build-up or orange/brown staining on your fixtures or appliances.
- Organic matter, including iron and sulfur bacteria, can build up on well components and fixtures.

Is my well at risk?

The visual appearance of the well water may provide a clear indication of a potential problem. Even the slightest hint of color or cloudiness indicates the presence of suspended solids in the water. The potential for suspended contaminants is greater for water wells near surface waters, shallow wells, and wells with damaged well casings. Some suspended sediment, however, may be difficult to detect with the naked eye. As a general rule, all new wells should be tested for the risks of contamination. If there is any suspicion of contamination, such as color, taste or illness, stop drinking or cooking with the water immediately, and do not resume use until testing has proven the water source to be safe. Always seek the advice of your medical doctor if you have any health concerns. See the wellhead information sheets on these contaminants on our website at www.usdwellcare.com.

wellcare® information on Sediment & Well Water

February 2017



Quick Guide for Well Owners: Simple Tips on Caring for Your Water Well Brochure

Quick tip: It is easy to damage the wellhead with heavy equipment. Consider purchasing a fiberglass driveway marker to identify your well's location when it snows.

Click on images for entire document or view all publications on our [website](#).

Frequently
Asked
QUESTIONS
of 2017

What is the best way to remove lead from my drinking water?

If a water test shows lead in your water, we recommend contacting a certified water treatment professional in your area to discuss the best options for your water system. **The Water Quality Association provides a searchable list of certified professionals on their website.** We also recommend that any water treatment devices you use are certified by **NSF International** or **the Water Quality Association**.

[NSF International has provided Certified Product Listings for Lead Reduction on their website.](#)

[The Water Quality Association maintains a list of Certified Water Treatment Products on their website.](#)

[For more information on Lead in Drinking Water view our information sheet.](#)

I have no water coming out of my faucets. What could cause this to happen?

First, check the breaker to the well pump to make sure it has not tripped. If the breaker is on, contact a licensed well contractor to inspect the well system and make any repairs necessary. There are a number of reasons a well could stop working properly. So it is best to have a licensed professional on-site to diagnose any problems.

[To locate a licensed water well professional in your area view our interactive map.](#)

AND, the #1 FAQ: How do I get my well water tested?

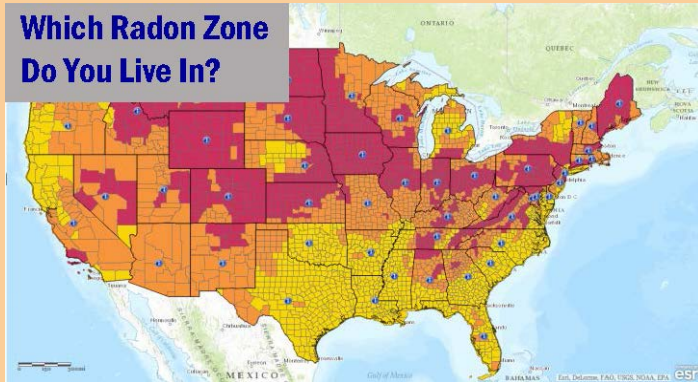
You can **locate a list of certified water testing laboratories in your area using our interactive map.** Contact the laboratory for prices, instructions on sampling, when you will receive your results and the information they will provide with your results. In most cases, you will need to tell the laboratory what you would like them to test for. If you have any questions on what you should test for or if you need help interpreting your results when you receive them, contact the **wellcare® Hotline** or your local health department for assistance.

[View our Well Water Testing information sheet for additional guidance.](#)

It's time for action! January is *National Radon Action Month*

You can't see, smell, or taste radon, but it can be found throughout the U.S. Most homeowners know to test their air for radon, but did you know you should test your water for radon? Testing is the only way to know if you have radon. [Find certified laboratories and radon service providers.](#)

**Which Radon Zone
Do You Live In?**



Click the image to find out about radon in your area and what resources are available.

Start 2018 off right with peace of mind!

SimpleWater is offering wellcare® Well Owners Network Members
10% off all Tap Score Test Packages with code:
2018WellCareSpecial.

Tap Score provides laboratory testing without leaving your home and comprehensive reporting that you can understand. Plus, shipping is included with each package! This is a GREAT way to begin monitoring your water quality and home health. **Get started today!**
Offer expires January 31, 2018.

Renting a Home with a Well

Updated Information Sheet Now Includes Septic Systems

wellcare® information for you about

Renting a Home with a Well

Groundwater, which accounts for 30 percent of the world's fresh water, occurs below ground where it is filtered and purified naturally as it passes through layers of the earth. Groundwater is stored in aquifers – layers of soil, sand and rocks, but can come to the surface naturally through a spring or brought to the surface through a well.

Modern wells allow us to access groundwater which provides a clean and efficient water supply to more than 43 million people nationwide. A professionally installed well is easy to maintain and can provide safe, affordable water for many years.

Private well owners are responsible for testing their water and maintaining their well. But if a rental home's drinking water is supplied by a private well, who is responsible for testing the water and maintaining the well? Some states or localities have laws that designate the responsible party in such cases. Where no laws exist, an agreement should be reached between the tenant and landlord to ensure the well is maintained and the water supply remains safe. Before renting a home with a well, thoroughly review the rental agreement to make sure the responsibilities are outlined.

Responsibility of the Landlord

Landlords are ultimately legally responsible for ensuring that residential rentals have clean, hot and cold running water. The safety and purity of your drinking water and the efficient operation of your private well system depends on a well-organized maintenance plan. The landlord, like any well owner, should protect their investment in a quality water supply through regular inspection and repair, annual water testing, and treatment.

Well Water Testing

Refer to your rental agreement for who is responsible for testing the water supply. At a minimum, every well should be tested annually for bacteria. Contact your local health department to ask if there are any contaminants of local concern you should also test for such as arsenic, lead, nitrate, and radon.

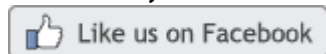
Water testing should be performed by a certified laboratory, county extension office, or local health department to ensure the test results are reliable.

This information sheet is intended to assist landlords and tenants in understanding their responsibilities when it comes to maintaining a drinking water well that is located on a rental property and should only be used for educational purposes as it does not constitute legal advice. Landlords and tenants should consult legal counsel in their state to ensure compliance with all applicable rules and regulations.

wellcare® Information on Renting a Home with a Well

December 2017

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



If we get to 10,000 likes on Facebook, we will have a drawing for a FREE Bacteria Test Kit!

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

We can help! Contact the wellcare® Hotline
at **888.395.1033** or www.wellcarehotline.org.

View [previous newsletters](#) and our [Well Owner's Manual!](#)



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