



Dear Well Owners Network Member:

From our family to yours...we wish you a healthy and happy New Year! We hope you have enjoyed the benefits of your free membership in the wellcare® Well Owners Network and want you to know that it's been a pleasure bringing you the most up-to-date and relevant information on caring for your water well system!

In our latest issue, you'll find ways to protect your well system from harsh winter weather, some tips on helping you survive winter, and discounts on testing for radon in your water. Read on....

Protect Your Well to Freeze Out Winter!



We still have several months of winter ahead of us and every year the wellcare® Hotline fields calls from homeowners with a frozen well or plumbing system. If your well or pipes freeze, contact your licensed well contractor or plumber as soon as possible. If you are in an area that tends to reach freezing temperatures, you should make every effort to prevent your pipes and well casing from freezing.

When pipes freeze, the flow of water is completely blocked. Since water expands as it turns into ice, the pipes are very likely to burst. It could also ruin your well pump. This can be an expensive problem to fix and a disastrous occurrence in frigid winter months. Both hot and cold water pipelines can freeze, so be sure to protect both.

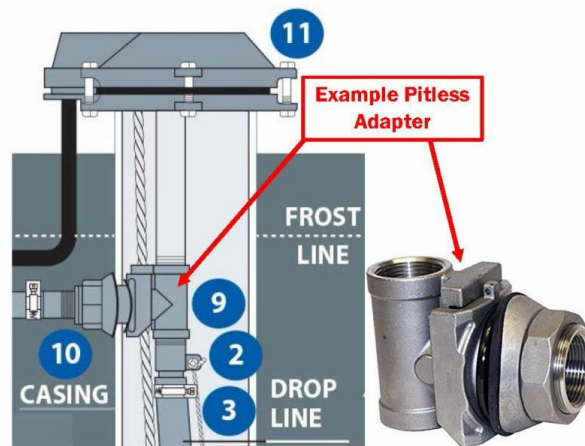
Your Pump and Well

Most well pumps are down inside the well at depths that do not freeze, so you will be protecting the well casing that is exposed (above ground) and your pipes. You can insulate your well casing and pipes with foam rubber sleeves or fiberglass insulation, wrapping the insulating material around the casing and pipes. For extra protection in the areas of your home that are not heated, such as a crawl space or basement area, pipes may first be wrapped with special heating strips and then an outer layer of

insulation wrapped on top. For assistance, contact a licensed well contractor or plumber in your area.

If you have an above ground pump, it needs to be kept in an area where the temperature stays above 40 degrees in order to prevent the water in the pump and water lines from freezing. If the pump is located in an area where temperatures drop below 32 degrees, the pump should be housed in an insulated enclosure. The pump motor does generate some heat which can help prevent the pump from freezing inside an enclosure. If your pump is exposed outside and your area experiences some days of freezing temperatures, contact your licensed well contractor to help with enclosing your pump to prevent it from freezing.

Help keep your well from freezing with a pitless adapter. A pitless adapter attaches to your well casing to provide a sanitary and 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. The adapter is connected to the well casing below the frost line, which is the depth at which the ground does not freeze. Water from the well is diverted horizontally at the adapter to prevent it from freezing. Contact your licensed well contractor to discuss installing a pitless adapter.



*Click the image for our complete sample well diagram.
This image is not intended as an installation guide.
Contact your well contractor for assistance.*

Your Pipes



If your home has an outside faucet or spigot, there may be a shutoff valve somewhere inside of your home. Turn off the water supply to this faucet for the duration of the winter. First, close the shutoff valve then open the outside faucet to drain the remaining water from the pipe. This will protect the pipes that lead to the outdoors from freezing. If you do not have a shutoff valve, consider having one installed.

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, has your water pressure dropped? Note: If you notice this problem prior to cold months, this is not a sign of pipes freezing. Contact your licensed well contractor for assistance.

If there is a cold spell and you fear your pipes are going to freeze despite the efforts you have made, there is still one more trick. Leave one of your faucets that is farthest from your home's water supply open and running slightly. If the water is running, it will be less likely to freeze.

For more information on protecting your well, contact your licensed well contractor, plumber, the wellcare® Hotline at 888-395-1033, and read our [**Winterizing and De-winterizing information sheet**](#).

Must-know Winter Tips

Our friends at *Farmer's Almanac* have come up with a creative list of tips to help get you through the dangerous conditions winter can bring:

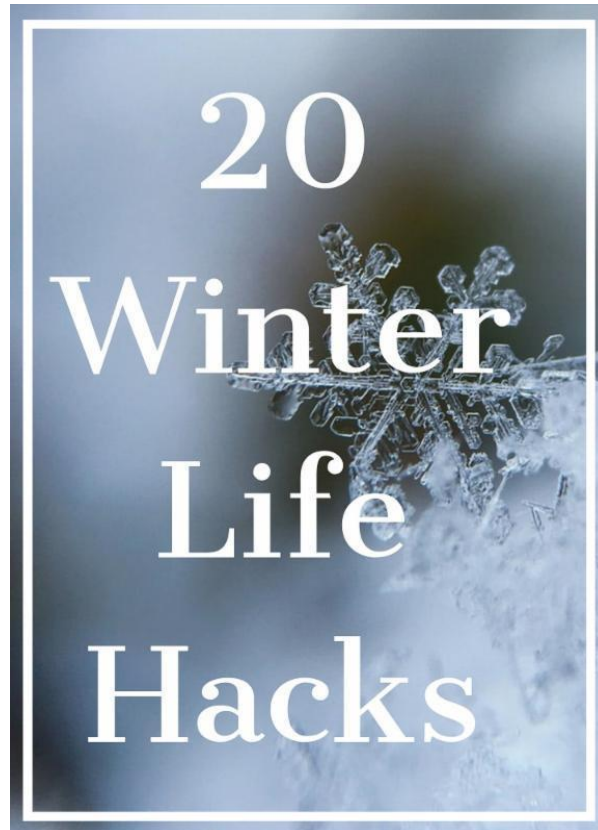
1. Socks on the go! Pack an extra pair of socks in your car's glove compartment. Then if you need to get out and shovel, or if you step into a puddle, you'll have dry socks to change into. And put those mismatched socks to use: use them as wiper blade covers!

2. Ceiling fans are not just for summer. Flip the switch to reverse the spin of the fan and turn on the lowest speed to blow warm air down from the ceiling.

3. Use energy from the sun. During the day, open drapes and blinds to allow sunlight to help warm the house, and then close at night to hold the heat in.

4. Dress in layers! Find the blankets, wool sweaters, and socks. If you can dress in layers while watching TV or working from home, you may be able to keep the heat at a minimum during certain times of the day.

5. Keep a bag of clay kitty litter in your car's trunk. If your car gets stuck in deep snow or slick ice, sprinkling kitty litter (non-clumping) at the base of your tires can be just the thing to add



some traction and get things moving again. The extra weight in your trunk will also create added pressure on your tires, ensuring greater contact between your tread and the ground.

6. Make a fertilizer spreader do double duty. Use it in winter to scatter sand on icy walkways.

****Note from wellcare®: Although we do not recommend using fertilizers near your well system, a clean 'fertilizer spreader' would be a handy tool for this purpose.****

7. Clogged snowblower? Simply spray the snow blower's clean, dry auger and inside the discharge chute with cooking spray, such as Pam®, before launching into snow drifts. You can also spray it on your shovel so snow won't stick.

8. Don't smoke or drink coffee before shoveling. Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants, and can add extra stress to the heart.

9. Prevent food spoilage. It might seem like a no-brainer, but if you lose power from a winter storm, don't let food spoil in the fridge. Pack it in coolers and move it outdoors (provided it's 30 degrees F or colder), or bury it in the snow safely so wildlife cannot get to it.



10. Learn to walk like a penguin. To walk safely on ice, walk like a penguin. Point your feet out, and hold your arms out slightly to your side. Shuffle, and take short steps.

11. Easy de-icer. Fill a clean spray bottle with 1 part water and 2 parts rubbing alcohol and store it in your car during the cold weather months. Spray it on your frosted windshield and windows on those chilly mornings to make scraping easier.

12. Gas up! During cold weather months, it's a good practice to keep at least a half a tank of gasoline in your vehicle at all times. Not only does it prevent you from being stranded, but

it prevents any water in the tank from freezing, which can damage the fuel pump.

13. Frost-free mirrors. Place plastic bags over your car mirrors at night and they'll be frost-free in the morning. Reuse them over and over.

14. Get some traction! Your car's floor mats can help you get unstuck from snowy or muddy conditions in a pinch. Place your front floor mats under the spinning tire to give you some traction. Just don't forget to retrieve them after you get moving!

15. Frozen locks? Squirt a little hand sanitizer on them. The isopropyl alcohol that kills germs also lowers the freezing point of water, and can melt the ice inside the lock within seconds.

16. Save your skin. Skip the long, hot showers, which can dry out skin. Try taking a lukewarm shower, for a shorter duration.

17. No ice scraper? A plastic card, such as an old gift card, from your wallet works in a pinch.

18. Grab a roll of duct tape and keep it in the car. Not only does it fix everything, but you can use it as a fire starter -- duct tape is very flammable and is a great tool to get a fire going in an emergency.



19. No more icy walkways. Alfalfa meal, which is an effective fertilizer and sold in most garden stores, is great for melting ice. And it's 100% organic so it's less of a threat to local water systems when used in moderation. Because it is dry and grainy, it also can add traction on slippery walkways.

*****Note from wellcare®: We love all these tips, but we especially love #19 since it is an eco-friendly salt alternative! Plus, not everyone can constantly shovel during***

*a snowstorm and of course there is always ice after the snow! Just remember to use it sparingly.***

20. To keep pipes from freezing, wrap them in insulation or layers of newspaper, covering the newspaper with plastic to keep out moisture.

****Note from wellcare®: We also have our own tip to help protect your well from getting damaged by snow blowers and plows: Don't pile anything around your well, including snow, and consider adding a fiberglass driveway marker to help with locating the well.****

Take Action!

January is National Radon Action Month



You may be familiar with concerns about radon in the air in your home, but what about your water?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that has no color, odor or taste, and comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil. Soil under the home releases radon, which escapes to the air, where it can dissolve in water and accumulate in your well.

Radon can be inhaled when it is released from water while

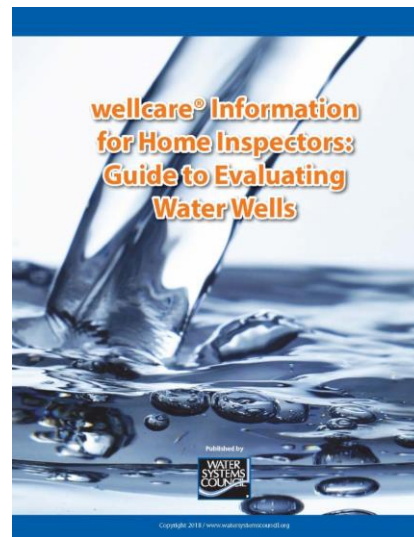
showering, washing dishes or cooking. It also can be ingested directly through drinking water. Inhaled radon is of greatest concern as it increases the risk of lung cancer.

Radon exposure is completely preventable. [Learn more about radon.](#) Test your air and water for radon today! [Click here](#) to find a laboratory in your area.

****[Tap Score](#) is providing a discount on [Radon](#) and [Gross Alpha/Gross Beta](#) water testing when you use discount code: **WONradon15**.
Purchase your test at mytapscore.com.****

More Free Resources for WON Members

An updated version of the ***Home Inspector's Guide to Evaluating Water Wells*** is now available for [free download](#) from the Water Systems Council website.



wellcare® information for Environmental Health Specialists Sealing a Well

A critical part of the groundwater protection services provided by state and local Environmental Health Specialists is the identification and sealing of irreparably damaged, contaminated, or abandoned wells. Until wells no longer in use are properly sealed, they are a safety hazard and pose a significant threat to groundwater quality.

This wellcare® information sheet includes information to help Environmental Health Specialists provide basic guidance to homeowners with concerns about abandoned wells.

Risks of Abandoned Wells

Surface water is filtered naturally as it travels down through soil and bedrock, replenishing our groundwater supplies. This natural filtration process removes minerals, organisms, and contaminants that can pose serious health risks. An unsealed or abandoned well can allow contaminants to travel directly into the groundwater, bypassing the natural filtration process and carrying potentially harmful contaminants directly into a drinking water supply.

Contaminants can enter an abandoned well through the opening of an unsealed well, through a damaged casing or well cap, or an open annulus of a well (the gap between the ground and outside of the casing) if the casing was not grouted or the grout has been damaged over time.

In the past, wells were constructed near the home. Today, if the foundation of a house is treated for insects, such as termites, a nearby abandoned well may provide a direct path for pesticides into the water supply.

Finally, abandoned wells pose a physical and environmental threat. Children and animals have been seriously injured or drowned in abandoned wells, even if the well is as small as 8 inches in diameter. Some have found it convenient to dispose of garbage and chemicals in old abandoned wells, unaware of the environmental and health hazard this creates.

Locating an Old Well

Some states require disclosure of old wells when a property is sold, but often the old wells have been long forgotten. An abandoned well may have been covered over with the construction of a parking area or a building, or simply hidden by overgrowth. Sometimes the only evidence of an old well is a depression in the ground or an old well casing in the yard near the house.

Environmental Health Specialists (previously titled Sanitarians) info sheets have been updated! Click the titles to view and download FREE! Includes: [Inspecting a Well](#), [Sealing a Well](#), and [Septic Systems](#).



Still Have Questions?

We can help! Call the wellcare® Hotline at 888-395-1033, [complete an online form](#), [send us an email](#), or [chat with us live!](#)

STAY CONNECTED:



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