FALL 2026

wellcare® Hotline: 888-395-1033

Dear Well Owners Network Member:

Fall is rolling in, and it's time to get your well system ready for the months ahead. Think of this as your seasonal pit stop. A quick check of your well, water, pipes, and equipment now can help you spot small problems before they turn into bigger ones when temperatures drop.

In this issue, we're taking a closer look at some common water quality concerns, what to watch for after a wildfire, and how to protect your well and plumbing if you're closing up a seasonal home for the winter or just need a refresh on cold weather must-haves.

So buckle up, check your well, and haul into fall with a healthy well! 🚚 🍃 🍁

If you have questions regarding these topics, if you cannot 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 **wellcarehotline.org**. Don't forget to follow us on social media: **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **Linktree**, **Pinterest**, **TikTok**, **X (formerly known as Twitter)**, and subscribe to our **YouTube channel** for videos, extra tips, industry news, and more!

Thank you for trusting us as your water well resource!

🚿 What's up With Your Water?

A quick look at four common well water concerns

Your water doesn't always come out of the tap looking, smelling, or tasting exactly the way you would expect. A little yellow color? Cloudiness? Orange stains? Black spots? Before you start wondering what is going on, let's break down four common things well owners may encounter: tannins, turbidity, iron, and manganese.

Some are primarily aesthetic concerns; however, changes in your water can also be a sign that it's time to test your water to see what's happening.

🍂 Tannins: Nature's Tea

Tannins are natural organic materials created as vegetation and other organic matter break down. As water moves through peaty soil, decaying vegetation, and other organic-rich areas, tannins can enter the water.

You may notice:

- Yellow or tea-colored water
- Yellow staining on laundry, fixtures, and china
- A tangy or tart taste
- Musty or earthy odors

Good to know: Tannins are more common in surface water and shallow wells and may be more prevalent in marshy, low-lying, or coastal areas.

👉 Read more: **Tannins & Well Water**

🌫️ Turbidity: When Water Gets Cloudy

Turbidity is a measurement of how cloudy or hazy water is because of suspended particles. Think of it like smoke making the air look cloudy. In groundwater, turbidity can come from sediment, organic material, or microscopic organisms picked up as water moves through soil and rock.

You may notice:

- Cloudy or hazy water
- Visible particles or sediment
- Changes in water appearance after heavy rain or other events

Good to know: High turbidity can interfere with some water treatment processes, including UV disinfection, because suspended particles can shield microorganisms from treatment.

👉 Read more: **Turbidity & Well Water**

🟠 Iron: The Stain Maker

Iron is naturally abundant in the Earth's crust and can dissolve into groundwater as water moves through soil and rock. Iron pipes can also contribute iron to water. Iron is generally considered a secondary water contaminant, meaning it is primarily associated with aesthetic concerns.

You may notice:

- Orange or reddish stains
- A metallic or bitter taste
- Rust-colored water
- Staining on laundry and fixtures

Good to know: Water containing soluble iron may come out of the faucet clear but turn reddish after sitting. Oxidized iron may appear rusty right away.

👉 Read more: **Iron & Well Water**

⚫ Manganese: The One to Watch

Manganese occurs naturally in soil and rock and can enter groundwater and surface water. It is often found alongside iron and may be associated with low pH water.

You may notice:

- Yellow, brown, or black discoloration
- Unpleasant tastes
- Dark staining on fixtures and appliances

Good to know: Manganese is an essential nutrient, but excessive exposure can be a health concern, particularly for children.

👉 Read more: **Manganese & Well Water**

🔎 THE BOTTOM LINE

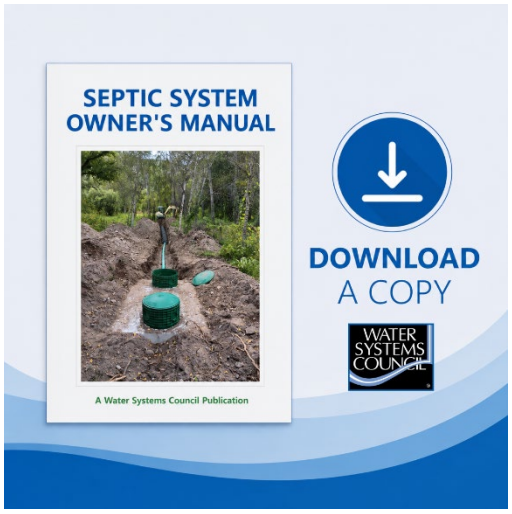
Not all changes in your water mean the same thing. Yellow or tea-colored water may be associated with tannins. Cloudy water may indicate turbidity or suspended particles. Orange staining can point toward iron, while black or dark staining may be associated with manganese. ***The only way to know what is actually happening is to test your water*.**

If you notice a sudden or significant change in your water's color, taste, odor, pressure, or flow, don't ignore it. A licensed well contractor can help determine whether the issue is with the well, the plumbing, or the water quality.

You can use **our interactive map** to find state-certified laboratories or water testing services and licensed well contractors in your area.

🚽 SepticSmart Week 2026

Give Your Septic System Some Love!



September 14-18, 2026 is SepticSmart Week! It's a great time to give your septic system attention and make sure you're doing your part to keep it working properly.

💧 Quick Septic Tips

- Keep fats, oils, grease, and harsh chemicals out of your drains.
- Flush only toilet paper and human waste. Keep wipes, diapers, and other trash out of the toilet.
- Use water efficiently and spread out laundry and other large water uses.
- Keep vehicles, heavy equipment, and deep-rooted plants off your drainfield.
- Have your septic system inspected and maintained by a qualified professional.
- Follow your professional's recommendation for when your tank needs to be pumped.

📖 Need Septic 101?

Our new 20-page Septic System Owner's Manual covers how your system works, routine maintenance, inspections, proper waste disposal, choosing a qualified professional, and protecting your system during emergencies.

Download your free copy or request a free hard copy to be mailed to you!

🔗 **Get the Septic System Owner's Manual**

Be SepticSmart. Take care of your system, protect your property, and help protect our water resources!

🔥 After the Fire

What Well Owners Need to Know After a Wildfire

Returning home after a wildfire can be overwhelming. Even if your well itself appears to be intact, your above-ground well components and water system may have been affected by heat, fire, ash, debris, or electrical damage.

Before turning on your water:

👀 Look first. Check your wellhead, casing, cap or seal, above-ground piping, pressure or storage tanks, electrical components, and water treatment equipment for damage.

⚡ Check for electrical hazards. Stay away from damaged or fallen power lines. If you suspect electrical damage or gas leaks, contact the appropriate local authorities or utility.

🧤 Protect yourself. Wear appropriate protective equipment when entering burned areas or handling ash and debris.

🚫 Don't turn on a damaged well system. If your wellhead or above-ground components are damaged, contact a licensed well contractor for an inspection and repairs.

After repairs:

Your well contractor may recommend shock chlorination or disinfection after repairs.

Remember, disinfection does not remove metals, pesticides, or other non-biological contaminants.

If your property or well has been affected by wildfire, have your water tested before using it for drinking or cooking.

👉 Download: **Wildfires & Wells information sheet** for more guidance on your well, water treatment, and septic system after a wildfire.

The **wellcare®** Hotline can also help! Our friendly staff members are available to answer your questions and provide you with any information you need to maintain a safe water supply and wastewater system. Contact us by calling 888-395-1033 or chat with us live at **wellcarehotline.org**.

🏡 Closing up for the season?

Don't Leave Your Well Out in the Cold!

Is your home or cabin vacant for the winter? Before you close the door and head out, make sure your well and plumbing are properly winterized. Your future self will thank you in the spring!

Depending on your system, winterizing may include:

- Shutting off the home's main water supply.
- Turning off the well pump at the breaker.
- Draining water from the plumbing system by opening faucets.
- Draining the water heater and treatment equipment, if applicable.
- Draining outdoor faucets and exposed water lines.

- Protecting plumbing traps with non-toxic propylene glycol RV antifreeze. Never use automotive antifreeze.
- If you have an above-ground jet pump, following the manufacturer's instructions for draining and protecting the pump.

💡 Tip: Leave signs on faucets, toilets, and equipment switches to remind anyone who enters the home that the water system has been winterized.

Your winterization steps will depend on your well system, plumbing, equipment, and climate. When in doubt, call a professional.

❄️ STAYING HOME? PREVENT A FREEZE

Even if you're home all winter, exposed pipes and above-ground well equipment can freeze.

Before the temperature drops:

- Insulate exposed pipes and vulnerable portions of the well casing.
- Keep above-ground pumps and pressure tanks protected from freezing temperatures with a properly insulated enclosure or other suitable protection.
- Drain outdoor faucets after shutting off their interior supply.
- During extreme cold, allowing a faucet to drip slightly can help keep water moving.
- Protect your wellhead from snowplows and other equipment by clearly marking its location with a fiberglass driveway marker.
- Talk with your well contractor about additional freeze-protection options, such as installing a pitless adapter if your well does not already have one.

🥶 WHAT IF YOUR SYSTEM FREEZES?

If you suddenly lose water or pressure during a freeze, call a licensed well contractor or plumber first. A loss of water isn't always caused by freezing, and a professional can determine what's happening.

If professional help isn't immediately available:

- Never use an open flame to thaw frozen pipes or equipment.

- For a frozen pipe, gentle heat from an electric heating pad or hair dryer may help thaw the area safely. Keep portable heaters away from flammable materials.
- If you suspect the well system itself has frozen, turn off the pump's electrical breaker and contact a professional.
- Watch carefully for leaks or burst pipes as the system thaws.
- If you have a burst pipe or damaged well equipment, have it repaired by a professional before returning the system to normal operation.

🚨 Watch for the warning signs

A sudden drop in water pressure or flow can be an early sign of freezing. Don't ignore it!

📖 WANT MORE WINTERIZING TIPS?

We've got you covered!

🔗 **Winterizing Your Well**

🔗 **Protecting Your Pipes & Well System From Freezing**

📞 Need help? Contact your licensed well contractor, plumber, or the wellcare® Hotline at 888-395-1033.

Prepare before the freeze. Protect your well all winter long!

Hotline 🔥 Hot 🔥 Topic: Sediment, Low Flow & Air - Don't Ignore the Signs!

This time of year our **wellcare®** Hotline hears more questions about dirty water, sediment, low water flow, and air in water lines. These symptoms can sometimes indicate that a well is experiencing low water levels or potentially going dry. But they can also have other causes, including problems with the pump, pressure tank, plumbing, or a change in water quality.

🚦 See the signs? Take action.

- Dirty or sediment-filled water

- Lower-than-normal flow
- Air sputtering from faucets
- Changes in water pressure

These don't automatically mean your well is going dry, but they are worth investigating.

If you're experiencing these problems, contact your licensed well contractor as soon as possible. Many well contractors are booked weeks or even months in advance, so getting on the schedule early can make a difference.

Keep these resources handy:

- **Coping with Low Water Levels**
- **Sediment & Well Water**
- **What to Do If Your Well Runs Dry**
- Find a licensed well contractor using **our interactive map**

📞 Have a well question? Contact the **wellcare®** Hotline at 888-395-1033, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. ET.

Kidz Korner: Be a Water Detective! 🔎

Where does all that fall rain go?

After a hot, dry summer, the ground may not soak up rain as quickly as you might expect. Some rainwater runs across the ground, plants use some, and some eventually soaks into the soil. As water moves deeper underground, it can help replenish groundwater, which supplies many private wells… including the water you drink!

Your Fall Water Detective Challenge! 🔎

The next time it rains, grab your detective hat and look around your yard. Can you spot:

☔ Where does the rainwater go?

🌧️ Does it run downhill or soak into the ground?

🍂 What happens when leaves cover the ground?

💧 Can you find a place where water collects?

Can you find ways to save water? Try these ideas:

🌱 Set out buckets when it rains and use the collected water for plants instead of using the hose.

🧹 Sweep leaves and debris off sidewalks and driveways instead of spraying them away with a hose.

🚗 Take your car to a carwash instead of washing it at home with a hose.

🌎 ***Remember!***

What happens above ground can eventually affect what happens underground. The way we use and care for water at home and in our yards can affect groundwater, so conserve water when you can and help keep the areas around your home and well system clean and protected!

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wellcare® HOTLINE
A Water Systems Council Program

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**!

Connect with us

Water Systems Council | 1101 30th Street, NW Suite 500 | Washington, DC 20007 US