

## IS MY WELL WATER SAFE?

For homes that use private water wells, there can be certain risks if the well is not properly maintained and the water routinely tested. The water in your well can become contaminated from various chemical and biological hazards and make you sick.

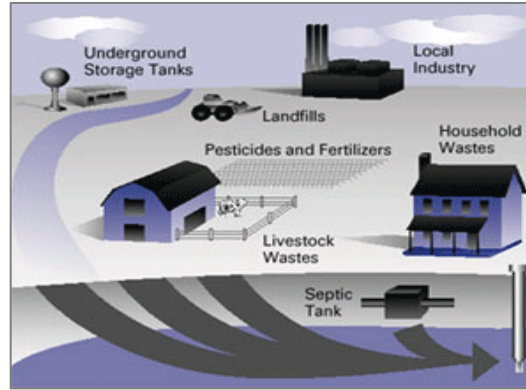
Since there are no federal or state regulations for water testing or maintaining private wells, it is the well owner's responsibility to make sure their water is safe to drink. Well water may not be safe to drink if:

- ◆ you detect a difference in the taste, smell, or appearance of your well water
- ◆ your well casing or slab is damaged
- ◆ you have frequent and unexplained illnesses in your household
- ◆ you spill fertilizers, pesticides, oil, gasoline, or other toxic substances on the ground near the well or in the well
- ◆ your neighbors find toxic chemicals in their well water

Many contaminants do not affect the taste and appearance of your water, but will affect your health. Test your well water routinely to ensure the safety of your drinking water.



## Typical Water Well Contamination Sources



## INSPECTION AND MAINTAINANCE

Regularly inspect your well for sources and entry points of contamination. Problems can exist with the land surface, the structure covering the well, the slab, the electrical conduit, the well cap, casing, and screen, and filtration equipment. Well maintenance includes cleaning and repair, caulking holes and cracks and keeping records.

Shallow and improperly constructed wells are especially vulnerable to contamination because of the potential for surface run-off and spills to get into your water supply. If you think your well might be contaminated or at risk, you should contact a professional to inspect your well.

### Properly Abandon Wells

Unused water wells that are not properly abandoned leave dangerous open holes in the ground. Abandoned wells serve as direct channels for contamination to pass straight through to a drinking water source used by many people. To abandon a well, the owner must hire a licensed well driller.

## POTENTIAL SOURCES OF WELL WATER CONTAMINATION

Pesticides, paints, cleaners, solvents, and many other toxic household chemicals must not be stored or applied near the well. Fuels like gasoline and oil are also poisons. Gasoline operated equipment such as lawn mowers can leak fuel onto the ground and travel to the water in your well. Also, any septic system and animal waste must be at least 100 feet from your well. These wastes can leach bacteria into the ground and contaminate your well water.

## WELL WATER TESTING

Test all new wells, and then test for bacteria every six months and for toxic chemicals every three years. To have your water tested, contact your county public health department, county cooperative extension agent or a certified private laboratory. If contaminants are found, a filtration or water treatment system can be installed.

**University of Georgia  
Cooperative Extension  
Well Water Quality Information:**  
[www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/housing](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/housing)

## PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

- ◆ Perform well inspections frequently and maintenance when needed
- ◆ Keep toxic chemicals, septic systems, and animal wastes away from your well
- ◆ Test well water for bacteria and chemicals when it is installed and on a regular basis.
- ◆ If you have water quality concerns, install a home water treatment system



## **IF MY WELL IS CONTAMINATED, WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

If you suspect there may be a problem with your well water, there are some guidelines you need to follow to protect your health.

- \* *Contact a professional to inspect your well.*
- \* *Have your well tested for bacteria. Your county Cooperative Extension and County Health Department, Environmental Health Section, can test your water for bacteria.*
- \* *Chlorination is recommended after installation, maintenance, or repair of private water wells.*
- \* *Contact your County Cooperative Extension Agent to test your well water for chemicals.*

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Georgia Division of Public Health  
Chemical Hazards Program  
(404) 657-6534

[www.health.state.ga.us/programs/hazards](http://www.health.state.ga.us/programs/hazards)

University of Georgia  
Cooperative Extension Service  
County Extension Agent

[www.caes.uga.edu/extension](http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension)

County Health Department  
Environmental Health Section

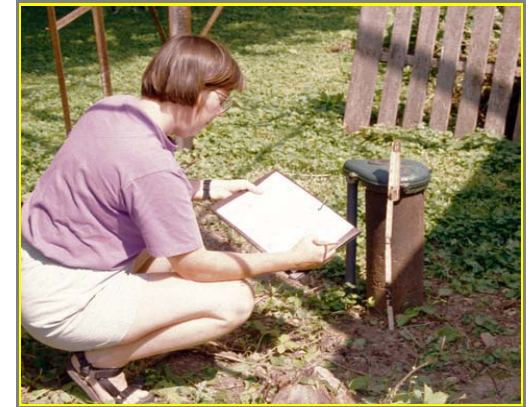
[www.health.state.ga.us](http://www.health.state.ga.us)

United States Environmental Protection  
Agency

Private Drinking Water Wells

[water.epa.gov/drink/info/well](http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/well)

# **WELL WATER QUALITY AND TESTING**



Source: Farm\*A\*Syst

Environmental Health Branch

**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

