

## My well tested positive for coliform bacteria. Now what?

First you should retest to confirm the results. If the second test also comes back positive, you should locate and fix the sanitary defect that allowed bacteria to grow then chlorinate your well following the steps below. Talk to a well driller or pump installer for help with this process if you do not feel comfortable completing it on your own.

1. Close gate valves so only the well will be impacted by treatment

2. Calculate the volume of water standing in the well

**Volume standing water** = length of water column \* volume factor

**Length of water column** = depth of well - depth to standing water

**Volume Factor:**

2 in diameter..... 3/4 qt water per ft

4 in diameter..... 1/2 gal water per ft

5 in diameter..... 1 gal water per ft

6 in diameter..... 1 1/2 gal water per ft

8 in diameter..... 2 1/2 gal water per ft

10 in diameter..... 4 gal water per ft

3. Put the same volume or more of clean water into clean garbage cans or other large storage containers

4. Add two quarts of bleach for every 100 gallons of water

Note that this ratio will create a solution that is 300 parts per million, the recommended concentration for most wells. A different desired concentration will require a different bleach to water ratio.

5. Turn off the electrical power

6. Remove well cap and add 1/2 cup calcium hypochlorite granules or tablets

7. Pour the water/bleach solution from the containers into the well as fast as possible

8. Turn the electrical power back on

9. Connect a new clean hose to a nearby faucet, turn the water on, and recirculate the chlorinated solution through the hose and back to the well, making sure to rinse the entire inside surface of the casing

10. Turn the electrical power back off

11. Drain the pressure tank and water heater

12. Turn the electrical power back on

13. Let the well water refill the pressure tank and water heater

14. Open every water faucet inside and outside until you can smell the chlorine solution at each one

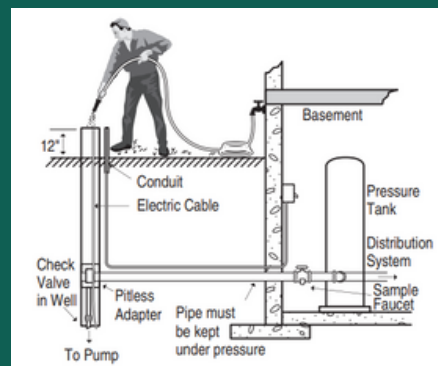
15. Turn the faucets off and allow the solution to stay in the pipes for 24 hours

16. Use a hose connected to an outside faucet to flush the chlorine from the entire water system

Make sure the hose is not draining into any landscaping, stream, river, or lake as the chlorine will be damaging. Also know that this flushing process can take some time. Keep allowing water to drain until you can no longer smell chlorine

18. After a week, resample the well to make sure the chlorine treatment was effective and the water is safe to drink

Scan here for more information from the WI DNR



# Well Water Testing

## Keeping You and Your Family Safe and Healthy

Sheboygan County  
Division of Public Health  
June 2023

## Why do wells need to be tested?

Safe, clean water is essential for drinking, cooking, bathing, cleaning, and more. City water is tested regularly to ensure it is safe, and your well should be tested too.

## Who should get their well tested?

Any household that uses a private well should have it tested, especially if there is someone pregnant or who may become pregnant or a child under 6 months old drinking the water.

## When should wells be tested?

Wells should be tested once a year. It should also be tested after a flood or if you notice your water tastes, looks, or smells different than usual.

## What tests should be done?

All wells should be tested for **coliform bacteria**, a microorganism that found in human and animal waste, soil, and surface water run-off. If coliform bacteria is in your well, other bacteria, viruses, and parasites may also be present. Wells should also be tested for **nitrate**, especially if there is a young child or a person who is pregnant or may become pregnant drinking the water. When consumed, nitrates limit the blood's ability to carry oxygen, causing suffocation in infants and miscarriages or birth defects in children born to mothers with high nitrate levels.

## How do I actually test the water?

Contact a certified lab (scan here to access a list) to do the testing. They will send you a sample kit and instructions on how to obtain the water sample.



## Contact Us

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Scan here to see  
this information  
as a PDF!



## My well tested positive for nitrates. Now what?

Contact a well driller or plumber for assistance. This is a serious issue, especially for people who are pregnant or under 6 months old, that must be fixed immediately,

## Wisconsin Well Facts

- There are over 800,000 private wells in Wisconsin
- Private wells provide drinking water for around 25% of Wisconsin's population - that's around 1.5 million people
- When buying or selling a home with a well, an inspection can be requested so all parties know the state of the well before a transaction takes place
- Wells must be filled and sealed if they are no longer in use
- You may be eligible for a grant to replace, repair, or treat your contaminated well! Scan this code to learn more

