

ZINC & WELL WATER

What is Zinc?

Zinc is an essential mineral that is necessary in small amounts for human health and growth. In its pure elemental form, it is a bluish-white shiny metal. Zinc can be found naturally in air, soil, and water, and enter the environment through anthropogenic activities like mining and metal processing. Zinc is known for being in many nutritional supplements, used in plumbing and batteries, and to help make pennies.

Elevated levels of zinc in drinking water may cause the water to have a milky, chalky, or turbid appearance and a metallic or bitter taste.

What are the health effects of Zinc?

Although zinc is necessary for health, high levels can cause stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, and skin reactions. Consuming high levels of zinc over a long period of time has also been known to cause anemia and damage to the kidneys and pancreas. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has stated that drinking water should contain no more than 5 mg of zinc per liter of water (5 mg/L or 5 ppm) because of taste. Well owners should use this level as a guideline for when to treat their well water.

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 Zinc?

You should test for zinc initially and monitor any level found annually thereafter. Contact your state or local health department or use our [interactive map](#) for a list of state-certified laboratories in your area.

What are the treatments for Zinc in well water?

Treatments to reduce zinc include distillation, ion exchange, and reverse osmosis. These technologies may have a wide range of effectiveness based on the amount of zinc in the water supply and other contaminants that may be present in the water. Look for treatment systems that are certified by [NSF](#) or [Water Quality Association \(WQA\)](#). Certified water treatment professionals can help you select the right treatment. To locate a certified water treatment professional in your area, visit [WQA's website](#).

It is imperative to maintain treatment devices and change filters as specified by the manufacturer or your water treatment professional. You should also retest your water after treatment is installed and after maintenance to confirm the effectiveness of the device.

NOTE: Boiling your water WILL NOT remove zinc, and in fact may increase the concentration in your water.

For More Information on Zinc and Well Water

Contact your licensed well contractor, local health department, or the wellcare® Hotline for more information on zinc and additional measures you can take to protect your well and well water.



Information to help maintain and protect your water well system:

wellcare® is a program of the [Water Systems Council \(WSC\)](http://www.watersystemscouncil.org). WSC is the only national organization solely focused on protecting the health and water supply of more than 13 million households nationwide who depend on private wells.

This publication is one of more than 100 wellcare® information sheets available FREE at www.watersystemscouncil.org.

Well owners and others with questions about wells and well water can contact the wellcare® Hotline at 1-888-395-1033 or visit www.wellcarehotline.org to fill out a contact form or chat with us live!

JOIN THE WELLCARE® WELL OWNERS NETWORK!

By joining the FREE wellcare® Well Owners Network, you will receive regular information on how to maintain your well and protect your well water.

Contact us at 1-888-395-1033 or visit www.wellcarehotline.org to join!