



SPRING 2022

wellcare® Hotline: 888-395-1033

Dear Well Owners Network Member:

We are changing things up a bit to hopefully put a "spring" in your step and make sure you are maintaining your well and well water. Within this edition, there are a few new topics (and some that needed spring cleaning!) including *Well Water and Children's Health*, *Well Water and Individuals with Compromised Immune Systems*, and *Well Water Testing*. All these topics have an accompanying brochure and information sheet that you can read and share. We also discuss septic systems and provide a discount on water testing. You won't want to miss this edition. So, save it, bookmark it, or print it so you can read it now and later!

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®](https://www.wellcare.org) Hotline can help! Contact the [wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) Hotline at 888-395-1033 or [wellcarehotline.org](https://www.wellcarehotline.org). Don't forget to like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/wellcare) and follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/wellcare) for extra tips, industry news, and more!

Children's Health is Wealth



Private well owners are responsible for maintaining their wells to ensure the safety of their water supply. This article provides recommendations to well owners and their families to help safeguard drinking water for children. **After all, they are the future!**

Groundwater is stored in aquifers – layers of soil, sand, and rocks – but can come to the surface naturally through a spring or brought to the surface through a well. More than 13 million U.S. households depend on

individual wells for their drinking water. Groundwater is naturally filtered on its way from the surface to the water table, so it is relatively free of particulate organic material and bacteria. However, it will only remain so if it is protected on its way from the aquifer to the tap.

Potential Contaminants of Concern

The following section provides information on contaminants that may be of special concern to households, especially with young children.

Bacteria and Other Microorganisms

We are in contact with millions of bacteria every day and nearly all of them are harmless. Yet some of these small organisms are responsible for waterborne illnesses. Bacteria, protozoa, algae, and fungi are all microorganisms. Microorganisms can only be seen through a microscope. Since we cannot see them without one, it is necessary to test your water. Waterborne microorganisms can trigger gastrointestinal illnesses, diarrhea, and vomiting which can be life-threatening for infants, children, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems.

Fluoride

Fluoride is a natural substance that comes from the element fluorine, which is naturally occurring in rocks and soil. As water passes through the earth, it absorbs fluoride. At low concentrations, fluoride is believed to prevent tooth decay and strengthen teeth.

However, excessive amounts of fluoride consumed over time can accumulate in the bones and lead to skeletal fluorosis.

Lead

Lead is a highly toxic dull gray metal that is soft enough to be easily scratched with a house key. Lead can get into your water as it flows through your plumbing system. Corrosion can cause lead to leach from lead pipes, lead-based solder pipe joints, and brass alloy faucets. Lead exposure at even minimal amounts can create serious behavioral and brain developmental problems for children. Low-level exposure can cause irritability, hyperactivity, and inattentiveness. Children exposed to higher levels of lead may have delays in physical or mental development.

Continue reading about potential contaminants and the actions you should take in our [Well Water & Children's Health brochure](#) and [information sheet](#).

Don't Be Hasty When It Comes to Safety

High levels of certain contaminants found in drinking water may not affect a healthy person. However, it could be detrimental to an individual with a weakened immune system. Individuals that are at higher risk of developing certain waterborne diseases include but are not limited to:

- Those with HIV/AIDS
- Cancer and transplant patients who are taking certain immunosuppressive drugs
- Anyone with inherited diseases that affect the immune system (e.g., congenital agammaglobulinemia, congenital IgA deficiency)



The information provided below is specific to the most common water quality concerns for those individuals with compromised immune systems.

Concerns for Immunocompromised Individuals

Microorganisms include bacteria, protozoa, algae, and fungi. Although viruses are not considered living organisms, they are sometimes classified as microorganisms. As we

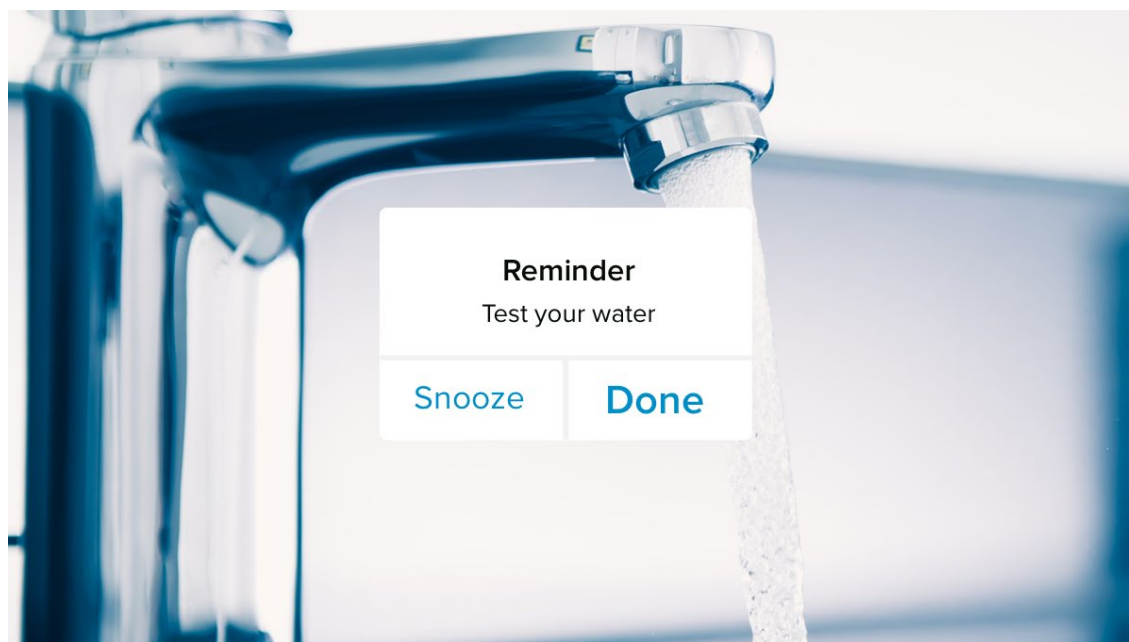
mentioned previously, the only way to determine if microorganisms are in your well water, is to test for them.

Cryptosporidium is a microscopic parasite that causes the diarrheal disease cryptosporidiosis. It is one of the most common causes of waterborne disease. Exposure to cryptosporidium is especially dangerous for people with weakened immune systems, there have been outbreaks and incidences in healthy populations as well. It is highly infectious, resistant to chlorine, and difficult to filter.

Additionally, individuals should also be aware of adenovirus, E. coli and fecal coliforms, giardia lamblia, legionella, mycobacterium avium complex (MAC), pseudomonas aeruginosa, salmonella, and turbidity. Discuss these additional contaminants with your doctor to see if testing is advised.

The risk of developing severe disease will vary depending on the person's degree of immune suppression. Discuss concerns with your doctor to determine whether your medical condition makes it advisable to follow recommendations in our [brochure](#) and [information sheet](#) on *Well Water & Individuals with Compromised Immune Systems*.

Keep Abreast and Test



Testing your well water is important to ensure your water quality is safe for you and your family. Private well owners are solely responsible for the quality of their drinking water, so it is up to you to decide when and how to test your water. Spring is a great time to test your water!

Download our [Well Water Testing brochure](#) and [information sheet](#) to determine what you should test for, information on contacting a laboratory, steps for sampling, and understanding your test results.

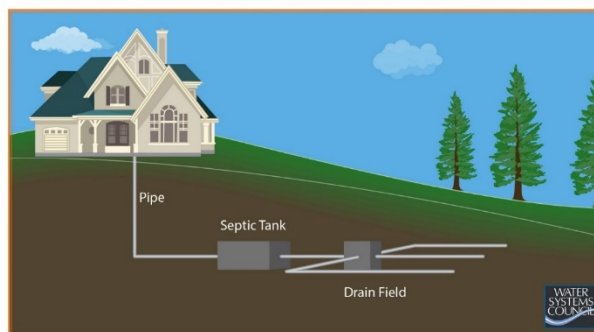
Water Testing Discount Available for Members!

Spring is the perfect time to have your water tested. SimpleLab created Tap Score, a service for easy home water testing and reporting. Tap Score is giving wellcare® Well Owners Network members a discount on their well water testing kits. You can order from the [Tap Score website](#) and use the discount code **WCNWIN22**.

Hotline HOT Topic: Check Your Septic Before It Gets Hectic

How far should my septic system be from my well system?

Most states require your septic system to be a minimum of 50 feet away from your well system. However, your local requirements may be different. We recommend that you check with your local or state environmental health department for the location requirements in your area before drilling a well.



If you need assistance locating your environmental health department, contact the [wellcare® Hotline](#).



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!](#)

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