



WINTER 2023

**wellcare® Hotline: 888-395-1033**

Dear Well Owners Network Member:

Happiest New Year to all our [wellcare®](#) Well Owners Network family. We hope you enjoyed the holidays. Now back to the grind! Winter newsletters are always a bit short but we do want to stress that this newsletter does not fall short on the importance of continuing well maintenance during these cold months and into the spring. If your area is not in freezing temps, that's okay, we still have plenty of news you can use.

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 like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) for extra tips, industry news, and more!

## National Radon Action Month



**January is National Radon Action Month!** Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that has no color, odor, or taste. It comes from the breakdown of radioactive elements like uranium and radium in the ground. The soil under your home releases radon which can make its way through cracks or openings in your home and sometimes through

well water. High levels of radon are commonly found in certain kinds of bedrock such as granite and dark shale. Radon can be inhaled when it is released from water while showering, washing dishes, or cooking. It can also be ingested directly through drinking water. Research shows that inhaled radon is the greatest concern as it increases the risk

of lung cancer. Drinking water contaminated by radon may raise the risk of stomach cancer.

**Here's the good news...radon exposure is completely preventable!** [Learn more about radon.](#) [Find a certified lab](#) in your area for both air and water radon testing.

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## Winter Tips (because baby, it's still cold outside!)

We have gathered the best winter tips over the last several years and put them all in one place. These tips are not only for your home but also while you are traveling. Let's dig in!

### There's 'snow' place like home:

- **Ceiling fans are not just for summer.** Flip the switch on the fan to reverse the direction clockwise. This will create an updraft and circulate warm air around the room.
- **Use energy from the sun.** During the day, open drapes and blinds to allow sunlight to help warm the house, and then close them at night to contain the heat.
- **Protect your well from getting damaged** by snow blowers and plows. Don't pile anything around your well, including snow, and **consider adding a fiberglass driveway marker** to help with locating the well.
- Got ice? **Alfalfa meal is an eco-friendly salt alternative.** It's 100% organic so it's less of a threat to local water systems when used in moderation. Plus, not everyone can constantly shovel during a snowstorm! Just remember to use it sparingly.
- **Winterize your pipes.** Preventing leaks and your pipes from bursting is a great way to conserve water in winter. You should make sure outdoor pipes, like the ones running to your backyard spigot, are wrapped to prevent freezing. You can wrap them with a pipe sleeve or electrical heat tape. If you need assistance, contact your local plumber.
- **Insulate hot water pipes.** Ever notice that it takes your shower longer to get hot when it's freezing out? That's because your pipes are colder. Just like your outdoor pipes, you should wrap your hot water pipes. Not only does this help the



hot water stay hot, but it helps protect these pipes from the cold, which can cause leaks. Again, if you need assistance, contact your local plumber.

- **Catch the water.** Since it takes longer for your shower to heat up in winter, catch that cold water and **use it to water plants.** You can use this tip year-round.
- **Save your skin.** Skip the long, hot showers, which can dry out the skin. Try taking a lukewarm shower, for a shorter duration and save water.
- **Check for leaks.** Temperature changes from night to day cause pipes to expand and contract. This constant change adds more stress to your pipes and can lead to a leak over the winter. Contact your local plumber to check your pipes for leaks.
- **When in doubt drip your faucets.** Leave faucets dripping slightly overnight in extremely cold weather (below 32°). This slight trickle allows constant movement of the water which will prevent freezing. Remember more water is wasted from a leaky pipe than from using this tip! You can still save the water you are dripping; just place a bucket or large pot under the faucet. You can use that water to flush the toilet in a power outage or water plants.
- **Know where the shut-off valve is.** Despite your efforts, sometimes a pipe will still burst in the winter. The faster you can turn off the water, less will go to waste. Most likely you will find the shut-off valve near your pressure tank if it is located inside your home. It looks like a regular spigot and it turns off all the water in your house. It will help save hundreds of gallons while you are waiting for your plumber to arrive.

If you are ever in doubt about your well or household plumbing contact your well contractor or plumber for assistance.

### The weather outside is frightful - travel tips:

- **Pack an extra pair of socks** in your car's glove compartment. Then if you need to get out and shovel, or if you step into a puddle, you'll have dry socks to change into. And put those mismatched socks to use and use them as wiper blade covers!
- **Dress in layers** while watching TV or working from home, you may be able to keep the heat at a minimum during certain times of the day.
- **Keep a bag of clay kitty litter in your car's trunk.** If your car gets stuck in deep snow or slick ice, sprinkling kitty litter (non-clumping) at the base of your tires can be just the thing to add some traction and get things moving again. The extra weight in your trunk will also create added pressure on your tires, ensuring greater contact between your tread and the ground.
- **Fill a clean spray bottle with 1 part water and 2 parts rubbing alcohol** and store it in your car during the cold weather months **for an easy deicer.** Spray it on your frosted windshield and windows on those chilly mornings to make scraping easier.
- During cold weather months, **it's a good practice to keep at least half a tank of gasoline in your vehicle at all times.** Not only does it prevent you from being

stranded, but it prevents any water in the tank from freezing, which can damage the fuel pump.

- Place **plastic bags over your car mirrors at night and they'll be frost-free in the morning.** Reuse them over and over.
- **Your car's floor mats can help you get unstuck from snowy or muddy conditions.** Place your front floor mats under the spinning tire to give you some traction.
- **Frozen locks? Squirt a little hand sanitizer on them.** The isopropyl alcohol that kills germs also lowers the freezing point of water and can melt the ice inside the lock within seconds.
- **A plastic card, such as an old gift card from your wallet, can work as an ice scraper in a pinch.**
- **Keep a roll of duct tape in the car.** Not only does it fix everything, but you can use it as a fire starter -- duct tape is very flammable and is a great tool to get a fire going in an emergency.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for more sweater weather tips!

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## Sediment & Well Water



### What is Sediment?

Sediment is naturally occurring particles that develop as earth materials are broken down through weathering and erosion. Sediment can consist of sand, rocks, and minerals, or may consist of organic particles like plants and microbes. Sediments may appear in well water as color or cloudiness which may or may not settle on the bottom of containers.

This type of sediment is called suspended solids. Additionally, some sediment develops from clear well water only after it is exposed to air. This type of sediment is called dissolved solids.

### **What are the effects of Sediment?**

Sediment can affect the quality of water in a number of ways. Besides an unappealing appearance, the sediment in the water can cause wear to plumbing, pumps, and water appliances or even create clogs throughout the water system to reduce the flow of water. Additionally, health risks posed by sediment in drinking water are from pollutants and pathogens that can attach themselves to sediment particles entering your water supply. Potential health contaminants can include microbes such as bacteria, viruses, and protozoa can be from pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides, and from dissolved metals like mercury, lead, and arsenic.

### **Sources of Sediment?**

Sediment can enter your water supply from several sources:

- Sediment from the drilling process may remain in recently drilled wells. It can take up to 30 days after a well is drilled and the water is used daily before the well settles and sediment is gone.
- Older wells, or wells drilled in loose bedrock, may experience sediment piling up at the bottom of a well, which might then be pumped into the plumbing system.
- Damaged or degraded well components, including casing, screens, and seals can create pathways that allow sediments to enter the well.
- Dissolved minerals, like calcium or magnesium (hardness), iron or manganese can precipitate out and develop into a white scale build-up or orange/brown staining on your fixtures or appliances.
- Organic matter, including iron and sulfur bacteria, can build up on well components and fixtures.

### **Is My Well at Risk?**

The visual appearance of the well water may provide a clear indication of a potential problem. Even the slightest hint of color or cloudiness indicates the presence of suspended solids in the water. The potential for suspended contaminants is greater for water wells near surface waters, shallow wells, and wells with damaged well casings. Some suspended sediment, however, may be difficult to detect with the naked eye. As a proven general rule, all new wells should be tested for the risks of contamination. If there is any suspicion of contamination, such as odor, taste, or illness, stop drinking or cooking with the water immediately, and do not resume use until testing has proven the water

source to be safe. Always seek the advice of your medical doctor if you have any health concerns.

See our [wellcare® information sheets](#) on these contaminants and continue reading for [information on testing and removing sediment from well water](#).

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## Hotline HOT Topic: Low Water Pressure or Flow

### *What is causing low water pressure or flow in my home?*

Sure, it can be related to low water levels, but there are a few other areas that may be causing the issue including, but not limited to:

- A clogged filter or water line
- Faulty electrical controls
- Frozen well or pipe
- Leak in system piping
- Malfunctioning or worn well pump
- Waterlogged pressure tank



[Contact your licensed well contractor](#) for inspection and repair. For a list of licensed well contractors try using our [interactive map on our website](#).

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## Kidz Korner: Up to Snow Good ❄️



Don't have any snow on the ground? That's okay, you can make it!

### **Fake Snow Supplies**

Sodium polyacrylate  
Water  
Container to mix in

### **What You Do**

There are a couple of ways to get the ingredient necessary to make fake polymer snow. You can purchase the fake snow or you can harvest sodium polyacrylate from common


household sources. You can find sodium polyacrylate inside disposable diapers or as crystals in a garden center, used to help keep soil moist.

All you need to do to make this type of fake snow is add water to the sodium polyacrylate and mix the gel. Add more water until you have the desired amount of wetness. The gel will not dissolve. It's just a matter of how slushy you want your snow.

Sodium polyacrylate snow feels cool to the touch because it is mainly water. If you want to add more realism to the fake snow, you can refrigerate or freeze it. The gel will not melt. If it dries out, you can rehydrate it by adding water.

***\*\*Once you are done with your snow creation, you can dispose of it in the trash. DO NOT put it down the drain into your plumbing or septic system. This product can cause clogs.\*\****

For complete details and tips go to [thoughtco.com](http://thoughtco.com).

 <p><b>wellcare</b> <b>HOTLINE</b> A Water Systems Council Program</p>	<h2>Still Have Questions?</h2> <p>We can help! Call the <b>wellcare</b>® Hotline at 888-395-1033, <a href="#">complete an online form</a>, <a href="#">send us an email</a>, or <a href="#">chat with us live!</a></p>
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