FALL 2025

wellcare® Hotline: 888-395-1033

Dear Well Owners Network Member:

As the seasons shift and cooler temperatures roll in, it's the perfect time to get your well and home ready for fall and winter. In this issue, you'll find guidance on winterizing your well and plumbing, a helpful new guide on caring for dug wells, and our latest Hotline HOT Topic exploring lithium in well water. We're also highlighting SepticSmart Week with practical tips for maintaining your septic system.

While cold weather is top of mind, we're also addressing another potential risk to your water system: earthquakes. Seismic activity can impact your well in any season, and we're sharing what to watch for and how to respond if an earthquake affects your water supply.

Additionally, we've included a hands-on fall activity for kids that combines water science with colorful creativity, using autumn leaves. Let's get your well system and your family ready for a safe and well-prepared season ahead!

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 follow us on social

media: **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **Linktree**, **Pinterest**, **TikTok**, **X (formerly known as Twitter)**, and subscribe to our **YouTube channel** for videos, extra tips, industry news, and more!

Thank you for trusting us as your water well resource!

🧊 Protect Your Well & Pipes From Freezing 🥶

As temperatures begin to drop, it's important to take steps now to protect your water well system and home plumbing from freezing. This is especially important for seasonal homes, such as vacation cabins or second homes, which are often left vacant and unheated during the winter months. These structures typically lack the insulation needed to withstand prolonged cold weather, leaving plumbing systems and well components vulnerable to freezing and bursting.

If you are closing a seasonal home for the winter, you'll need to fully winterize the plumbing, including your water well, to prevent costly damage. We strongly recommend hiring a licensed plumber or well contractor to handle this process. However, if you plan to winterize your home yourself, be sure to follow best practices to avoid frozen or burst pipes and damaged equipment.

❄️ Why Winterizing Matters

Even year-round homes are at risk if they are located in areas that experience below-freezing temperatures. Frozen pipes can block water flow, burst under pressure, and even damage your well pump or pressure tank. Repairs can be expensive, and a frozen water system can leave your home without water during some of the coldest days of the year. If your system does freeze, contact a licensed contractor as soon as possible.

💡 Key Tips to Prevent Freezing

- Winterize seasonal homes thoroughly before temperatures drop. Drain all pipes, shut off water at the main valve, and take steps to protect your well system.
- Install a pitless adapter. This device connects your water line to the well casing below the frost line, providing a frost-proof, sanitary seal and protecting your water supply from freezing. Talk to a licensed well contractor about this option.
- Insulate your wellhead: If you're caught off guard by a sudden cold snap, you can temporarily protect your wellhead by using blankets, towels, or other insulating materials. Avoid anything that may trap moisture or cause damage.
- Mark your well if it is located near a driveway, path, or road. Heavy snow and snowplow equipment can damage exposed wellheads. A simple driveway marker can help locate and protect your well during snow removal.

📄 Get More Help

Find a licensed well contractor in your area using **our interactive map**. For more information, download our wellcare® information sheets:

Protecting Your Pipes and Well System From Freezing

Winterizing and De-winterizing Your Well

💧 NEW Resource: Caring for Dug Wells 🕳️

If your property relies on a dug well, it's essential to understand that these shallow water sources require special care to remain safe and reliable. Unlike deeper drilled wells, dug wells tap into groundwater close to the surface, making them more vulnerable to contamination from runoff, nearby septic systems, and other hazards.

Our new information sheet, "Caring for Dug Wells," gives you the practical guidance you need to maintain a healthy water supply.

🔍 **Inside, you'll learn:**

- How dug wells are designed and what makes them different
- Simple, routine maintenance tips to keep your well in good shape
- How to protect your well from surface water, debris, and pollutants
- When it's time to call a licensed well contractor

Whether you've just moved in or have relied on your dug well for years, this guide helps you take smart, preventive steps to safeguard your drinking water.

📄 Download the full information sheet: **Caring for Dug Wells**

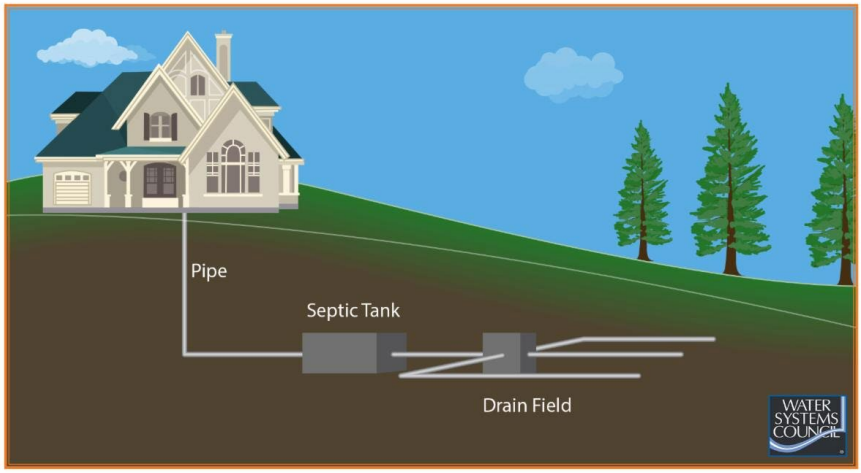
Hotline 🔥 Hot 🔥 Topic: Lithium in Well Water

The wellcare® hotline receives questions on Lithium in well water throughout the year. We have released a new information sheet on lithium in private well water - what it is, how it gets there, and what you need to know about health and treatment.

➡️ Found naturally in some areas, lithium can enter groundwater and show up in private well testing. While low levels are not uncommon, high concentrations may raise concerns.

🔍 Read more and download the fact sheet: Lithium & Well Water

🚽 Get SepticSmart



Your septic system plays a huge role in protecting your well water. Join us in celebrating SepticSmart Week (Sept. 15-19), a national campaign promoting proper septic care.

💧 Top tips for well owners with septic systems:

- Never flush wipes, even if labeled “flushable.”
- Space out water use to prevent overload.
- Inspect and pump your tank every 3 to 5 years.
- Make sure your septic is at least 50 feet from your well. Local rules may vary. Always check with your health department.

📚 Stay SepticSmart all year long - Read our info sheet on **Your Septic System** and follow us on social media for more tips during SepticSmart Week. Find all our social media pages on our **LinkTree**.

🌎 Earthquakes and Your Water Well

While earthquakes are more common in certain areas of the country, like along the West Coast or near fault lines, smaller seismic events can occur almost anywhere. If you have a water well, it's important to understand how earthquakes can affect your water supply and what to do if you suspect damage.

🧱 How Earthquakes Can Impact Water Wells

Even mild earthquakes can shift underground formations, which can impact your well in several ways:

- **Fluctuations in Water Levels**: Some wells experience a sudden rise or drop in water level after a seismic event. This may be temporary or could signal a more significant shift in the underground water source.
- **Changes in Water Quality**: After an earthquake, your water may become cloudy, discolored, or have an unusual taste or odor. This can happen when silt, sand, or other materials are shaken loose into the aquifer.
- **Contamination Risks**: Cracks in the casing or surrounding ground can allow bacteria or surface water to enter the well. This can pose a serious health risk if not addressed promptly.
- **Physical Damage to Well Components**: Strong earthquakes can damage well casings, pipes, seals, or even the pump system, especially if the well is older or not properly constructed.

🛠️ What to Do After an Earthquake

If an earthquake occurs in your area, no matter how small, take these steps to check on your well system:

1. Inspect the area around your well. Look for visible signs of damage such as cracks, leaning, or displaced soil near the wellhead.
2. Check water clarity and pressure. Turn on the tap and note any changes in water appearance, taste, odor, or pressure. Murky water could indicate contamination or aquifer disturbance.
3. Test your water. It's a good idea to test your well water after any seismic activity, especially for bacteria and nitrates. These are common contaminants that can enter through cracks or disrupted soil.
4. Contact a licensed well contractor. If you suspect physical damage or if your water quality has changed, a well professional can inspect and assess your system. Do not attempt repairs yourself.
5. Disinfect the well if needed. If your test results indicate bacterial contamination, your well may need to be disinfected. You can find instructions on our **website** or contact the wellcare® Hotline for help.

👉Be Prepared

Earthquakes can happen without warning. Here's how to stay ready:

- Keep a record of your well's construction details and past water tests.
- Know how to shut off power to your pump system in case of an emergency.
- Store emergency water - at least one gallon per person per day for three days.
- Have your well inspected regularly to ensure it is structurally sound.

If you're in an earthquake-prone region or have recently experienced tremors, don't wait to check on your well. Your water safety could depend on it.

📞 Have questions? Contact the **wellcare®** Hotline at 888-395-1033 or visit **wellcarehotline.org** for testing help and contractor referrals.

Kidz Korner: 🍁 Leafy Rain Painting

Explore how water moves using fall leaves and color! This creative activity helps kids observe how water travels through materials, and it doubles as a fall-themed art project. Plus, it uses natural elements like fallen leaves and teaches about absorption and color mixing.

🍂 What You'll Need:

- White coffee filters or paper towels
- Fall leaves (fresh, not too dry)
- Water
- Food coloring or washable markers
- Paintbrushes or droppers
- Small cups or bowls
- A tray or workspace that can get a little messy

🎨 Instructions:

1. Place a coffee filter or paper towel on your tray.
2. Arrange a few fall leaves on the paper.
3. Mix water with a few drops of food coloring in small cups (or draw designs on the paper with markers).
4. Using a dropper or paintbrush, gently drip the colored water over the leaves and paper.
5. Watch how the colors spread, soak through, and mix. You'll see fun patterns form as the water moves around the leaves.
6. Let your painting dry, then hang it in a window to enjoy your autumn art!

🧠 **Did You Know?**

Water moves through materials using capillary action. That's how trees and leaves "drink" water from the ground! This activity shows how water travels and mixes, just like in nature.

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wellcare® HOTLINE
A Water Systems Council Program

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**!

Connect with us

Water Systems Council | 1101 30th Street, NW Suite 500 | Washington, DC