



**WINTER 2025**

**wellcare® Hotline: 888-395-1033**

---

Dear Well Owners Network Member:

Happy New Year to all our [wellcare®](#) Well Owners Network members! We are thrilled and grateful that you are joining us for another year!

As winter settles in, this edition of our newsletter brings you essential information to keep your water well in excellent condition. We'll provide important tips for National Radon Action Month, cover emerging contaminants of concern in well water, and share practical advice on freeze protection with a new video! Last but certainly not least, we have a fun and educational science experiment for the littles...an "Edible Aquifer"! Keep reading for more water well tips and then reward yourself with a yummy treat!

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](#), follow us on [X \(formerly known as Twitter\)](#), and subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) for videos, extra tips, industry news, and more!

---

## January is National Radon Action Month!



You may be familiar with concerns about radon in the air of your home, but what about your water?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that has no color, odor, or taste and comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil. The soil under the home releases radon, which escapes to the air, where it can dissolve in water and accumulate in your well. 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. Inhaled radon is of greatest concern as it increases the risk of lung cancer.

There is good news, radon exposure is completely preventable! [Click to learn more about radon and to find a certified lab in your area.](#)

The [wellcare®](#) Hotline can also help! Our friendly staff members are available to answer your questions and provide you with any information you need to maintain a safe water supply. Contact us by calling 888-395-1033 or chat with us live at [wellcarehotline.org](#).



## Hotline 🔥 Hot 🔥 Topic: Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) & Well Water

Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) refer to substances that are gaining attention due to their potential to harm human health and the environment. These contaminants can come from pharmaceuticals, personal care products, industrial chemicals, and other synthetic materials. They can enter the groundwater through wastewater discharges, runoff from agriculture, and even household waste. CECs are a growing concern for water wells, particularly in areas where wells draw from shallow aquifers or where local groundwater is vulnerable to contamination.

While CECs can be found in groundwater year-round, **they have the potential to be more of an issue in winter months** for a few important reasons:

1. **Increased Runoff and Leaching:** In many areas, winter brings more precipitation (rain or snowmelt). This can lead to increased runoff, which may carry contaminants into groundwater. Frozen ground can also limit the natural filtration of contaminants, allowing them to travel more easily into groundwater.
2. **Septic System Overload:** In colder months, septic systems can become less efficient due to freezing temperatures. If a septic system fails or becomes overloaded, CECs from household waste can leach into the groundwater.
3. **Reduced Dilution:** In the winter, these contaminants are frequently less diluted than at other times of the year due to reduced water flow in rivers, streams, and aquifers (it is considered the “dry season”). This can increase the concentration of CECs in groundwater.

If you're concerned about CECs in your well water, it's important to test it regularly especially if you live in an area where these substances are more likely to enter the groundwater. By taking preventative measures, you can ensure the safety of your well water.

You can use our [interactive map](#) to find certified laboratories near you that can test your well water.

Download our [wellcare®](#) information sheet on [Contaminants of Emerging Concern \(CECs\) & Well Water](#) for more information.



## ❄️ Winter Weather Tips ❄️



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.
- **Protect 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°F). 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 licensed 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 [X](#) for more sweater weather tips!



## **NEW [wellcare](#)<sup>®</sup> Video Alert!**

This just in! We have a new video on our YouTube channel! It gives an overview on the topic, “Protecting Your Pipes & Well System from Freezing”. Check it out [here](#) or click on the image below.

Please remember to like and subscribe so you can be the first to know when we add more water-related videos!



## Kidz Korner

🔍 Make an Edible Aquifer 🍷



This fun, hands-on experiment can help you teach your children about aquifers (where the water in your well comes from). It demonstrates how pollution can get into your well water, as well as how pumping the well water causes the water table to drop. Read the instructions below for a step-by-step guide on how to make one!

Take a short video or photo of your edible aquifer and post it on our social media pages with [#kidzkorner](#) for a shout-out.

**What you'll need:**

- Small gummy bears, chocolate chips, crushed cookies, breakfast cereal, or crushed ice
- Food coloring
- Vanilla ice cream
- Club soda or Sprite
- Cake decoration sprinkles and sugars
- Drinking straws
- Spoons
- Clear cups

**Instructions:**

1. Fill a small, clear cup about one-third of the way with your first ingredient. This represents all of the sand, gravel, and rocks in the aquifer.
2. Cover your "gravel, sand, and rock layer" with clear soda which represents water. This is our groundwater. See how the "water" fills in the spaces around the "gravel, sand, and rock."
3. Spread a layer of ice cream over the soda. This layer of our aquifer is called the confining layer, which is usually clay or dense rock. The water is confined below this layer.
4. The next layer is our top layer of soil. Decorating sprinkles and some colored sugar can be used to represent this layer.
5. Add some food coloring to a small amount of soda. The coloring represents pollution. Can you think of some pollutants that can affect groundwater? Watch what happens when we pour it on the land.
6. Using your straw, drill a well (push the straw down toward the bottom of the cup) into the center of your aquifer.



7. Slowly begin to pump the well by sucking on the straw. Watch as the water table goes down. Also, watch and see how the contaminants can get sucked into the well area and end up in the groundwater by eventually leaking through the confining layer.
8. Pretend it's raining and recharge the aquifer by adding more soda. A real aquifer takes a lot longer to recharge, this is just an example to speed up the process.
9. Now it's time to enjoy your aquifer!

Adapted from <https://neponset.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/How-to-Make-an-Edible-Aquifer-1-1.pdf>



Are you going to try to make an edible aquifer???

[Totally! I'm in it for the sweets \(and some science\)!](#)

[Maybe, I'm not sure.](#)

[No thanks, but it looks fun!](#)



## Still Have Questions?

We can help! Call the **wellcare**® Hotline at [888-395-1033](tel: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 20007 US