

Testing Your Water



When Should I Have My Water Tested?

Initially:

- ✚ When a new well is drilled
- ✚ If there is no record of testing
- ✚ You are buying a home with a well

Annually:

- ✚ At a minimum
- ✚ Spring is the best time to test

And...

- ✚ Before installing treatment system
- ✚ Sudden changes in taste, color, or odor
- ✚ Someone in the home is pregnant or nursing
- ✚ Failure of a septic system
- ✚ After a flooding event
- ✚ Someone in the home has a sudden, unexplained illness

What Should My Water Be Tested For?

At a minimum, test for the following common contaminants that can present health risks:

Bacteria: Most common contaminant found in well water.

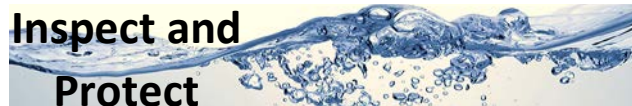
Nitrates: Often from faulty septic systems or fertilizers.

Arsenic: Occurs naturally and was once a common ingredient in pesticides.

Lead: Commonly from household plumbing.

How Can I Have My Water Tested?

Stop by the Sawyer County Public Health Department and pick up your water sample kit. Indicate which test you would like to conduct. Fill out the "Water Test Request Form." Follow the instructions closely on how to properly collect the water sample. Return the water sample(s) bottle to Sawyer County Public Health preferably the same day you take the sample, along with payment. We will notify you with the results. It's that easy! Remember, we only receive water sample Monday – Thursday 8:00 am – 3:30 pm. Closed 11:30 pm – 12:30 pm daily.



Inspect Your Well:

Regularly inspect your wellhead for damage to the casing or well cap. Contact a licensed well contractor to repair any damage immediately to reduce the potential for contamination.

Protect Your Well Water Supply:

Store all chemicals at least 100 feet from your well. Keep heavy equipment and vehicles off of your lawn and away from your well to avoid damage to buried water lines. Allow only grass to grow around your well. Other plants can have longer roots that can damage your well casing. Do not pile leaves, snow, or anything around your well, and consider adding a fiberglass marker to help with locating the well during fall and winter months. To avoid well contamination, septic tanks should be pumped every 3 years based on use and family size.

Private Water Supplies

As one of Wisconsin's 900,000 private well owners, most wells provide a clean, safe supply of water. Since there are no requirements to test a private well except for bacteria when the well is first drilled or the pump is changed, you are accountable for making sure your water is protected. If your drinking water does not come from a public water system, you alone are responsible for assuring that it is safe. For this reason, routine testing for a few of the most common contaminants is highly recommended. Even if you currently have a safe, pure water supply, regular testing can be valuable because it establishes a record of water quality. This record is helpful in solving any future problems.



If my well is contaminated, what happens?

Don't panic and no need to rush into expensive repairs or water treatment systems just yet. If the sample is positive for bacteria, it is recommended to try and figure out the reason for the sample results, fix the problem and retest before drinking the water. If positive a second time, and have found no obvious sources of contamination, you should have your entire system inspected and disinfected by a licensed, professional Well Driller or Pump Installer. Do not consume the water unless you boil it, at a rolling boil, for at least 1 minute.

For information and resources on Private Well Water Testing, please contact Sawyer County Health & Human Services or visit our website.

Sawyer County Health and Human Services partnered with the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh to provide local and convenient Private Well Water Testing for residents of Sawyer and neighboring Counties.

Water Testing Options

- **Coliform Bacteria \$25**
 - Annual test detects presents or absence of Total Coliform and *E. coli*
- **Nitrates \$25**
 - Recommended to test annually with Bacteria; see Combo package below
- **Arsenic \$35**
 - Should be tested once every 5 years
- **Bacteria & Nitrate Combo \$45**
 - Test both annually for one low price
- **Homeowners Package \$60**
 - Includes Bacteria, Nitrates, Arsenic, pH, Iron, Hardness, Alkalinity
- **Real Estate Package \$80**
 - Bacteria, Nitrates, Arsenic. Samples analyzed in a couple of days, not weeks
- **Metals Package \$125**
 - Arsenic, Copper, Iron, Lead

This list is not a complete list of all water tests. Contact Sawyer County Health & Human Services or UW-Oshkosh for help with testing recommendation. Always consult with your physician for any health concerns.



Sawyer County Health & Human Services
Environmental Health and Drinking Water

10610 Main St, Suite 224

Hayward, WI 54843

1-800-569-4162 x 2401

715-634-4806 x 2401

E-mail: mmckay@sawyerhs.hayward.wi.us

Web Site:

<http://www.sawyercountygov.org/511/DrinkingWell-Water-Testing>

Drinking Water Lab Samples Are Accepted
Monday - Thursday 8:00 am - 3:30 pm.
Closed 11:30 pm - 12:30 pm daily.

Last Time I Had My Well Water Tested:

Date: _____ For: _____

Date: _____ For: _____

Date: _____ For: _____

Date: _____ For: _____

Date: _____ For: _____

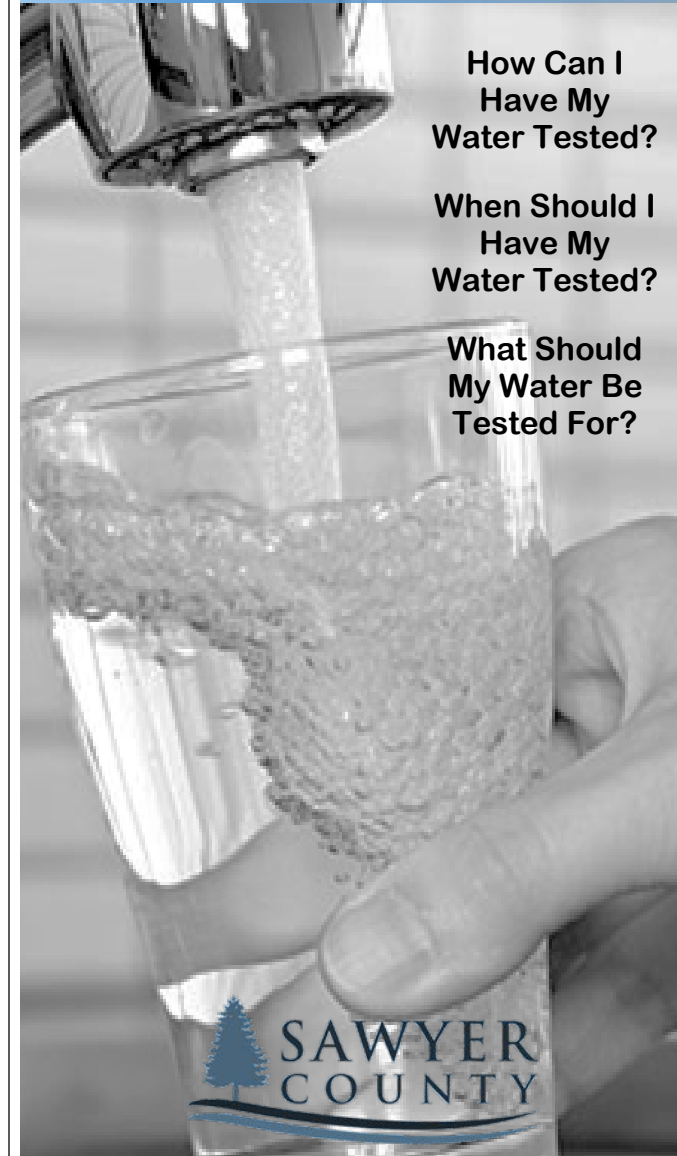


Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Sawyer County Health Department

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Sawyer County Health
& Human Services



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