

wellcare[®] information for you about **Well Maintenance**

The safety and purity of your drinking water and the efficient operation of your private well system depends on a well-organized maintenance program. Protect your investment in a quality water supply through regular inspection, testing and repair or treatment.

Create a Well Maintenance Log

Gather a comprehensive history on your well and water quality. If you don't already have a well log (also known as a water well record or drilling report), ask your well driller for a copy.

The well log will include a reference number for the well, original site owner, location of the well, construction and contractor details, as well as the results from any water tests. The well log should help establish the location, age and condition of the well. This information will provide the basis on which to schedule regular tests of water quality and inspections of well equipment, as well as regular maintenance and repairs.

Set a Well Maintenance Schedule

Plan for the maintenance of the wellhead, well system, water quality, water treatment devices and septic system.

Well Inspection

- Inspect your wellhead several times a year. Check the condition of the well covering, casing and well cap to make sure all are in good repair, leaving no cracks or other entry points for potential pollutants.
- Have the well system, including the pump, storage tank, pipes and valves, and water flow, inspected every 10 years by a qualified well driller or pump installer.
- If you have no inspection record and cannot determine the age of the well, have it inspected immediately by a water well professional.
- When your well reaches the end of its serviceable life, usually more than 20 years, contact your water well professional to install a new system and properly close the old well.

Water Testing

- Test drinking water immediately if you have no recent test results or any record of previous tests.
- Test drinking water for bacteria every year. Also test annually for nitrates if you live in an agricultural area or have an on-site septic system. The best time to perform these annual tests is in the spring.
- Test if you notice any change in the taste, color or odor of your water.
- Test more than once a year in special situations: someone in the household is pregnant or nursing; there are unexplained illnesses in the family; your neighbors find a dangerous contaminant in their water; or there is a spill of chemicals or fuels into or near your well.
- Test after disinfection, within one or two weeks, to make sure the water is pure.
- Test after any flooding in or near the well, to determine if flood water carried bacteria or other contaminants into the well system.

Contact your local health department, cooperative extension service office, private testing laboratory or state environmental agency for other water testing guidelines and for test kits. Also, review the Water Systems Council information sheets Drinking Water Testing and Drinking Water Treatments.

Water Treatment System

- Test drinking water before installing any water treatment device.
- Test water every year to make sure the device is working properly.
- Follow the inspection and maintenance schedule provided by your water treatment device manufacturer or water well professional.

Review the Water Systems Council information sheet *Home Drinking Water Treatment Devices*.

Septic System Testing

- Inspect the septic tank each year for capacity and leaks.
- Pump out the tank as needed, usually every three to five years, based on the number of people in the household and the size of the tank.
- Repair the tank or drainfield system as needed to prevent leaks of bacteria and nutrients into the drinking water.

A poorly maintained wastewater treatment system poses a serious threat to the quality of your drinking water and can require expensive repairs. The cost of pumping a septic tank (\$100 to \$250) is far less than the expense of replacing a drainfield clogged by solids (\$2,000 to \$8,000).

For more information on well maintenance

*Home*A*Syst: An Environmental Risk-Assessment Guide for the Home* (Natural Resource, Agriculture and Engineering Service (NRAES) and the Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 1997) can be found in the reference section of many public libraries or ordered from NRAES at www.nraes.org or 607-255-7604. A single copy costs \$11.50, including shipping and handling.

For more information on your drinking water

The following sites provide up-to-date information on efforts to protect public water supplies and steps you can take as a private well owner:

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| The Groundwater Foundation | www.groundwater.org |
| U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | www.epa.gov/safewater |
| American Groundwater Trust | www.agwt.org |
| National Ground Water Association | www.wellowner.org |

For more information about wells and other wellcare® publications

wellcare® is a program of the **Water Systems Council (WSC)**. WSC is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promote the wider use of wells as modern and affordable safe drinking water systems and to protect ground water resources nationwide.

Contact us at 888-395-1033 or visit www.watersystemscouncil.org



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