

# PRIVATE WELL TESTING



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

It is important to regularly test your well because the water can be contaminated over time by different sources. Some contaminants can harm your health. **Even if you've never gotten sick from your water, it is your responsibility to properly maintain your well and regularly test it to ensure you have safe drinking water.**

## ↓ POTENTIAL CONTAMINANTS IN PRIVATE WELLS ↓



**Bacteria** - From human or animal waste. Can cause diarrhea, vomiting, and digestive system diseases.



**Nitrate** - From agricultural areas and septic systems. Causes "blue baby syndrome" in infants 6 months of age or younger.

**Metals** - Naturally occurring or from industrial waste. Metals like arsenic can increase risks of certain cancers.



**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)** - From leaking tanks underground or surface spills. Can increase risks of certain cancers.



**Pesticides** - Used on crops and lawns. Can increase risks of certain cancers.

**Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)** - From PFAS manufacturers and other sources. Lowers birth weights, effects immune system, and increases cancer risks.



## WHERE TO GET HELP WITH TESTING



**Coliform bacteria and nitrate testing:** Your local health department. Search for them on the internet.

**Metals, VOCs, pesticides, and PFAS:** Commercial labs. IDPH can assist you with finding an appropriate one.

**Test for coliform bacteria and nitrate every year and metals every three years.** Test for VOCs, pesticides, or PFAS if they've been found near you. IDPH can help interpret the results and give treatment recommendations.



## REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO DETECTED CONTAMINANTS

CONTAMINANT	HOW TO REDUCE EXPOSURE
Bacteria	Boil water before being used for drinking and cooking and disinfect your well.
Nitrate	<b>Don't</b> boil the water; this concentrates nitrate levels. Avoid giving your water to infants 6 months of age or younger.
Metals, VOCs, Pesticides, and PFAS	Install water treatment systems or use alternative sources of water. Recommendations may vary based on the type and level of contamination.

## GET MORE INFORMATION

IDPH Toxicology  
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