

# Water Testing

## FACTS:

- Approximately 14-15 million households in the U.S. rely on a private, household well for drinking water each year, and more than 90,000 new wells are drilled each year.
- Michigan has more households (1.12 million) served by private wells than any other state, with approximately 25,000 domestic wells drilled per year.
- Germs and chemicals can get into wells and contaminate them in different ways. Some germs and chemicals occur naturally, like arsenic, lead, and cadmium. Other contaminants come from human and animal waste resulting from polluted storm water runoff, agricultural runoff, flooded sewers, or individual septic systems that are not working properly.
- Contaminated water can cause diarrhea, hepatitis, and bacterial infections.

Safe Families = Safe Homes Month

## RESOURCES:

**Livingston County Department of Public Health**  
517-546-9850  
<http://www.lchd.org>

**Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)**  
**1-800-292-4706** (within Michigan)  
[www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq)

**U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**  
<http://www.epa.gov/>  
Safe Drinking Water Hotline  
(800) 426-4791



## **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:**

- EPA rules that protect public drinking water systems do not apply to privately owned wells. If you are a private well owner, it is up to you to make sure that your well water is safe to drink.
- Contaminated water does not necessarily taste, smell, or look any different from safe drinking water.
- The only way to know if your well water is contaminated is to test it.
- You should test your well annually for mechanical problems and every two to three years for harmful chemicals. In addition, you should test your well if there are known problems with well water in your area, you have experienced problems near your well (i.e., flooding, land disturbances, and nearby waste disposal sites), and/or you've replaced or repaired any part of your well system.
- DEQ has primary enforcement authority in Michigan for the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act under the legislative authority of the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act. DEQ has regulatory oversight for all public water supplies, including approximately 1,500 community water supplies and 11,000 noncommunity water supplies.

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## **SERVICES AVAILABLE:**

- Drinking water test kits to assess the quality of your drinking water, whether you use water from a public system or private well.
  - Consultation to improve drinking water quality if testing identifies a problem.
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