

Well Water Testing Recommendations

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) regulates water wells that are used as potable water supplies for permitted food service establishments, swimming pools and tourist accommodations in Georgia. Water quality for these businesses must meet compliance standards established under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Private water wells in Georgia, however, are not subject to any regulatory authority or standards. Therefore, it is the well owner's responsibility to monitor the quality and ensure the safety of their drinking water.

DPH IS REVISING ITS RECOMMENDED WELL WATER TESTING PROFILE



Water quality is a significant public health concern throughout the United States. At DPH, our goal is to offer residents a cost effective, comprehensive and relevant water test profile that accurately reflects specific health concerns in Georgia.

DPH and the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension collaborated to help serve the needs of residents using private wells for their drinking water. The previous water test profile, W-33, that is the compliance standard for all DPH regulated wells, has also been recommended for private well owners to ensure the safety of their drinking water for newly constructed wells and for routine well maintenance.

The new test package is called the Private Well Chemical Test (W-33C). The W-33C water test for private wells will provide additional public health protection by including the recommended arsenic and lead tests, along with the W-33 test parameters. The W-33C test is available through County Cooperative Extension offices for all private well owners in Georgia.

At DPH, our goal is to offer residents a water test that addresses potential health concerns in Georgia. The new test package W-33C profile will analyze for several parameters in addition to

- ✓ Arsenic
- ✓ Lead
- ✓ Fluoride
- ✓ Nitrate and Nitrite



WELL WATER TESTING RECOMMENDATIONS

SOURCES OF ARSENIC AND LEAD

Arsenic is naturally occurring in rock and soil. It can enter into groundwater through erosion and has been detected at elevated levels in some South Georgia water wells. Lead usually contaminates water through plumbing fixtures and components. In Georgia, while this risk of being exposed to lead from well water is low, DPH recognizes the consequences of lead exposure and the importance of early detection. Early detection requires frequent testing.

Test all new wells. Test all wells for bacteria (W-35) at least once per year (especially shallow wells) and for toxic chemicals (W-33C) every three years.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WELL WATER TESTING?

For more information, visit the Cooperative Extension online for various drinking water related titles:

<http://extension.uga.edu/publications>

Testing for Water Quality Fact Sheet:

<http://aesl.ces.uga.edu/publications/watercirc/TestingWaterQuality.pdf?2>

HOW CAN I UNDERSTAND MY TEST RESULTS?

The Cooperative Extension has an online interactive tool to assist well owners with understanding their water test results. The Drinking Water Interpretation and Recommendations Tool allows you to enter your test results into an online form for each particular contaminant. This tool allows the user to compare drinking water test results to the federal drinking water standards. It shows if there is anything to be concerned about, the potential sources of the problems (if any), probable health effects and suggested remedial measures, such as effective filters. It also provides links to several additional sources of information.

To access the Cooperative Extension **Drinking Water Interpretation and Recommendations Tool**, visit:

<http://aesl.ces.uga.edu/water/recommendations>

For all other inquiries, including how to collect well water samples for analysis, contact your County Cooperative Extension agent, or call **1-800-ASK-UGA1**.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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Environmental Health Section
Chemical Hazards Program
(404) 657-6534
dph.ga.gov/chemical-hazards

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