



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GET YOUR ANNUAL CHECKUP – FOR YOUR WELL

Eau Claire, WI – August 4th, 2016 – Just as you have regular checkups with your doctor for you and your family’s health, you also need a regular checkup for your private well! Safe, clean water is important for drinking, cooking, bathing, and cleaning. City water systems test their water regularly to make sure it is safe, but it is up to private well owners to test their well water. Well checkups should be done each year or if there is a change in color, taste, or smell.

Why do I need a checkup for my well?

How we use land, such as for housing or farming, can affect the quality of our water. Nitrate is a common pollutant in Eau Claire County and can enter our water through leaky septic systems or runoff from lawns or farm fields. Across Wisconsin, about 1 in 5 wells in farmed areas may be over the safe level of nitrate in water. In Eau Claire County, this means up to 1,800 private wells may have unsafe drinking water. “Private wells in subdivisions without sewers or wells in heavily farmed areas have the greatest chance of nitrate pollution,” says Shane Sanderson, Director of the Environmental Health Division. “Yearly well checkups can identify pollution in private wells that can make us sick.”



How do high levels of nitrate make us sick?

Nitrate levels above 10 parts per million are most harmful for pregnant women and infants. Infants ages 0 to 6 months can get sick with an illness called “blue baby syndrome” after drinking water with high nitrate, such as water mixed in formula. Nitrate may also hurt a developing fetus during early stages of pregnancy. Boiling water does not remove nitrate.

Nitrate levels above 2 parts per million may mean there are other pollutants in our water that can make us sick, such as bacteria, prescription drugs, or other chemicals used on lawns or fields.

How do I get a well checkup?

- Pick up a sample bottle from the Eau Claire City-County Health Department. We

recommend a yearly nitrate and bacteria test, which costs \$34.

- Schedule an annual inspection by a local well driller or plumber to check the physical health of your well. Keeping your well in good physical health can help prevent water pollution.

If your drinking water is unsafe:

If your well has unsafe levels of nitrate, bacteria, or other pollutants, the Health Department can recommend more tests or treatment options that can improve the safety of your water.

For more information, visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/private/wells/disease/nitrate.html>

<http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/departments/health-department/environmental-health/private-wells>

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Keeping people in all Eau Claire City/County communities *safe* and *healthy*