

TOPIC:

TESTING PRIVATE WATER WELLS

Overview

Unlike municipal water, private wells are not routinely tested or regulated. The only way to know if well water is safe to drink is to test it at an approved lab. It is recommended that private wells be tested annually for coliform bacteria, including E.coli, and nitrates. Water should also be routinely tested for heavy metals, including lead and arsenic.

Residents can sample their water and submit it to the Indiana State Department of Health's Lab. Residents can also hire private labs for testing; a list of labs can be found on the ISDH website.

Homeowners can also check with their local health department. For example, the Marion County Public Health Department tests well water for bacteria and chemical contamination. They then help interpret the results and make recommendations, which may include installing a treatment system or disinfecting the plumbing.

Impacts on Our Water

Many things can impact the quality of well water, including failing septic systems and historical contamination from leaking underground tanks or industrial spills. Some contaminants are naturally occurring - arsenic is prevalent in Indiana due to the bedrock in certain areas. Plumbing can also impact the well water. Lead and other metals can leach out of the pipes and into the water. The only way to know the quality of the water and ensure it is safe is to have it tested.

More Information

<http://marionhealth.org/private-well-program/>

Gretchen Quirk
gquirk@marionhealth.org



High iron can cause orange staining and is very common in Indiana



Typical well head in found in yard