



IS YOUR WELL WATER SAFE TO DRINK? PROTECTING THE AREA AROUND YOUR WELL IS VITAL

If your drinking water comes from a well, there are things you can do to ensure that it's safe for your family's good health (your neighbors' health, too). Prevention is key.

PREVENTION

Taking care of the area around your well can help keep your water from becoming contaminated. Your own land-use practices and well maintenance also play a role in protecting your drinking water—and prevention is much less costly than clean up!

LEARN & ACT

LOCATE YOUR WELL. Determine if it is a dug well or drilled. Dug wells are more susceptible to contamination from surface water runoff, because they are shallower. Report any unused or abandoned wells to the health district.

INSPECT THE WELLHEAD. Check the cap, seal, and area around the casing for leaks, making sure the access port is plugged. If present, the well vent should be inverted and screened. The well casing should extend one to two feet above the ground (or flood level); mound around the casing with clay to prevent surface water from collecting. For repairs, contact a licensed well driller.

TEST YOUR WATER. This should be done yearly to check for bacteria and every three years for nitrate—more often if your well is hand dug. Call us for more information, as well as a list of certified labs.

KEEP RECORDS. Important records include well installation, repairs, pump tests, and water quality results.

PROTECT THE WELLHEAD. Keep surface water runoff away from the well head, which should be upslope from potential contamination sources. A curtain drain upslope can be installed to divert runoff. Contact us if you are going to install a new or replacement well or septic system.



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BUFFER THE WELL. Create a safe zone around the well (a minimum of 100 feet), free from potential pollutants, such as animal waste, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, etc. Don't store any chemical products in the well house.

PROTECT THE SOIL. Oil, gasoline, and household chemicals can seep into the soil, contaminating well water. Contact Kitsap Public Works' Household Hazardous Waste Facility at 360-337-5777 about safely disposing these.

GARDEN RESPONSIBLY. Avoid fertilizers and pesticides within 100 feet of your well. For pest control, consider biodegradable products, physical barriers, beneficial insects, and companion planting. If chemicals are necessary, use them sparingly, installing a backflow prevention device on hose bibs for mixing. Avoid over watering to slow chemical movement into the soil and ground water.

CHECK LIVESTOCK. Animals and their enclosures should be kept at least 50 feet from a drilled well and 100 feet from a hand-dug well.

OUR ROLE

We protect the health of all Kitsap families by preventing the hazards of contaminated ground water with information and education. We're here to answer your questions about keeping your own well water safe.

MORE INFORMATION?

Call us at 360-337-5235.

RESOURCES

See us online under Environment.