

Well Testing Kits for Private Well Households

JANUARY 2, 2025

Free well test kits available for private well households

The MDH in collaboration with the Tap-In Collaborative are offering free well test kits for private well households that meet both of the following:

- Rely on a private well as their drinking water source, and
- The private well is in Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Wabasha, or Winona counties.

To determine if a household is eligible and to request a test kit, complete this form:

<https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=3HNK8H3N33TTR479> . If someone needs help completing the form and you are available to help them complete the survey via phone call at (651)-565-4673. If no staff are available or there are technical issues, please call (651) 201-4366. If a household is eligible, their information will be passed to Southeastern Minnesota Water Analysis Laboratory (SEMWAL). SEMWAL will ship the requestor instructions and a private well test kit for nitrate, coliform bacteria, arsenic, lead, and manganese. Due to high demand, there may be a 2-10 week wait for a test kit to get delivered. The household can return the kit for free by mail.

Common Questions

What contaminants are being analyzed as part of the test kit?

Test kits are to analyze for nitrate, coliform bacteria, arsenic, lead, and manganese. If participants would like to test for other contaminants, they must pay for these at their own expense.

Can I get a test kit for just one of the contaminants? (I don't need all of these analyzed.)

The free test kits are only offered for the group of five contaminants; selecting individual contaminants is not an option.

Does the participant need to own the home to be eligible?

Participants do not need to own the home to participate; homes with a private well in the eight counties will be eligible for a test kit even if the occupant is a renter or the home is the non-primary residence (e.g. cabin or vacation home).

I have multiple homes in the area can I request more than one test kit at a time?

If you own multiple homes, you will need to fill out one request for each residence.

Will MDH receive the results of these test?

You will be the first to receive the results of the water tests from your private well. SEMWAL will also share the water quality results from the free test kits with MDH.

Will the water quality results be publicly available?

Individual-level results will not be available publicly. However, results at a census tract, township, and county level will be grouped together to show patterns in nitrate concentrations. Sharing this aggregate data at a census tract or township level can help people learn about the water quality in their neighborhood

What if a water quality result other than nitrate comes back above a health-based guidance value?

If an arsenic, manganese, lead, or coliform bacteria result comes back above a health-based guidance value, the State is unable to provide funds for treatment. The private well owner/user is responsible for treating these contaminants.

Refer to the MN Department of Health website for guidance on recommended treatment systems/types for each contaminant. For specific water treatment information including specific products or how to design a water treatment system, you should work with a water treatment professional. Click the link to go to the Department of Health's website.

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html>

Point of use reverse osmosis treatment for eligible households

Currently the Tap-In program has an application for Reverse Osmosis Systems, you are open to apply if you have test results from a certified lab that proves that you're well tested above the 10 mg/L for nitrates. Sensitive homes will be prioritized first such as those with an infant under the age of one and/or homes with pregnant women. Application to apply for treatment: Water Treatment System Application or through the Tap-In landing page. Application to apply for treatment:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/03bd35f1235347a58321406739e46c89?portalUrl=https://www.arcgis.com> or through the Tap-In landing page: <https://safe-drinking-water-for-private-well-users-gis-olmsted.hub.arcgis.com/pages/tap-in-application>