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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE: May 2, 2016

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Know Your Water and Protect Your Water During Drinking Water Week and Year 'Round

Concord, NH - The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) is observing national Drinking Water Week, May 1-7, by urging everyone to know what's in their drinking water, and to protect it from possible contamination. The theme of this year's Drinking Water Week is, "Your Water – To Know It Is To Love It."

Roughly half of New Hampshire residents are served at home by community water systems, and half by private wells. Community water systems, which must meet extensive testing and water quality requirements, provide their customers with an annual water quality report, either in hard copy or online. Since there are no similar testing requirements for private wells, NHDES urges private well users to have their water tested every three to five years at an accredited laboratory. Well users can then use NHDES's "Be Well Informed" website to understand their test results and learn about water treatment options based on those results. Testing recommendations, a list of accredited labs, and the Be Well Informed tool can be found by searching the internet for "NHDES Private Well Testing."

Both community water customers and private well users should also know how to protect the sources of their water supplies. If spilled on the ground, pollutants can reach groundwater, and ultimately water supply wells and reservoirs. NHDES urges well users to prevent any spills of gasoline or similar pollutants, and to make sure fertilizers and pesticides are kept away from wells and used according to label directions. "Preventing contamination of water supplies is everyone's job," according to NHDES water supply administrator Sarah Pillsbury. "Individuals and businesses, and local and state governments all have a part to play."

Knowing what it takes to ensure a safe and reliable water supply is another focus of drinking water week. The job of public water systems continues to be extremely challenging—especially in an era of scarce public funds. The drinking water infrastructure in many cities is aging and presents daunting financial demands. "In New Hampshire, the estimated funding need is \$2.9 billion over the next 10 years for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades, repairs and replacement," according to Pillsbury. "When you consider how important safe drinking water is to your health and your family's health, that really puts your water bill in perspective with other monthly expenses such as cable and cell phone service. The same is true of the cost of testing and treating water from a private well."

For more information, search the internet for "NHDES DWGB."

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Private Well Testing Program

If you have a private well, then water quality testing should be important to you and your family. Some contaminants in drinking water have been linked to cancer and toxicity, posing a risk to human health. Many contaminants often have no taste, odor, or color. Their presence can only be determined by laboratory testing.

While there is no state requirement to have your well water tested (although there may be from your mortgage lender or town), DES recommends that all homeowners with private wells do so. Use the [accredited laboratory search](#) to find a laboratory near you.

Hot Topics

- [Test It - A short video on how to test your well](#)
- [Healthy Water - A short video on the health concerns for common contaminants in New Hampshire's groundwater](#)
- [Recommended Water Quality Testing for Private Wells](#)
- [Well Testing Community Action Toolkit](#)
- [NHDES Be Well Informed Private Well App](#) - An interactive web application for private well owners to interpret water quality test results and identify appropriate water treatment options
- [Arsenic in Private Wells in New Hampshire, Year 1 Report – Exposure, Health Effects, and Proposed Interventions](#)
- [Arsenic in Private Wells in New Hampshire, Year 2 Report – Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation of Interventions](#)
- [Labs Conducting All DES Recommended Tests for Private Wells](#)

Publications

- [Drinking Water Fact Sheets](#)

Education/Outreach

- [Recommended Water Quality Testing for Private Wells](#)
- [Drinking Water Safety Requirements and Recommendations for Child Care Programs](#) (Fact Sheet WD-DWGB-21-7)
- [Análisis de Agua para su Pozo Privado](#) (en español)
- [Comprehensive Well Checkups](#)
- [Putting into Perspective the Health Risks from Drinking Water Contaminants](#)

Technical Assistance

- [Checklist for Inspecting Your Well](#)
- [Labs Conducting All DES Recommended Tests for Private Wells](#)

Related Programs

- [Accredited Laboratories](#)
- [DPHS Public Health Laboratories](#)
- [Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau](#)
- [Drinking Water Source Protection Program](#)
- [NH Water Well Board](#)

Resources/Links

- [In Small Doses: Arsenic \(movie\), Dartmouth Toxic Metals Research Program](#)
- [US EPA's Ground Water Web site](#)

Contact Us

If you want to have your well water tested please see [Labs Conducting All DES Recommended Tests for Private Wells](#)

- If you have a question please contact:
NHDES Drinking Water & Groundwater Bureau
29 Hazen Drive; PO Box 95
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The NHDES Be *We*//Informed Guide

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH AND HOME

INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR
TREATING YOUR WELL WATER

The **Be *We* Informed** Guide from NHDES is designed to help you understand your water test results and, if your well water has commonly found pollutants in it, provide information about health concerns and water treatment choices. New Hampshire is fortunate to have an abundance of clean groundwater, and nearly half of New Hampshire's residents (over 500,000 people) rely solely upon domestic wells (also called "private wells") as their primary source of drinking water. While many private wells provide safe drinking water, certain pollutants like arsenic, iron and manganese are sometimes present in groundwater at levels that can affect your health and home.

NHDES recommends private well owners test their well water every three to five years for pollutants commonly found in New Hampshire's groundwater. This group of commonly found pollutants is listed in the NHDES Private Well Brochure and is referred to as the "Standard Analysis." (http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/well_testing/documents/well_testing.pdf) The Be Well Informed Guide evaluates the pollutants that are part of the Standard Analysis. NHDES recommends that you have your water tested at a NHELAP accredited laboratory. (<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/nhelap/documents/labs-private-wells.pdf>) When you have your water tested, your test results will be summarized in the form of a lab report.

With your water test results in hand, click the button below to enter your test results from your laboratory report. You will receive an evaluation of your well water quality and, if advisable, water treatment options. Regardless of water treatment technology, it is essential that your treatment system is maintained on schedule in order for it to work properly.

Read This Disclaimer Before Proceeding

Information provided on this website is for informational purposes only and should not be substituted for direct consultation with a qualified water treatment professional. Other conditions or factors related to your well or home not considered by this online guide may determine the most appropriate water treatment options.

Enter Your Well Water Test Results

[DES Private Well Brochure \(http://des.nh.gov/organization/d/private-wells.pdf\)](http://des.nh.gov/organization/d/private-wells.pdf)

[Accredited Labs in NH \(http://des.nh.gov/organization/d/private-wells.pdf\)](http://des.nh.gov/organization/d/private-wells.pdf)

[NHDES Private Well Testing Program \(http://des.nh.gov/organization/d/private-wells.pdf\)](http://des.nh.gov/organization/d/private-wells.pdf)

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