

HOW DO I DISINFECT MY WELL?

It is important to periodically disinfect your well and plumbing with chlorine bleach to help keep your drinking water as safe as possible.

- If the water is discolored, flush the well until the water is clear or up to ten minutes.
- To avoid re-contaminating your well during the disinfection process, remove grease and mineral deposits, and disinfect the wellhead with a solution of 1/2 cup of laundry bleach in 5 gallons of water.
- Shut off the power to the pump, remove the well plug on the well seal and using a funnel, pour unscented chlorine into the well. Pour Chlorine solution consisting of 2 cups of unscented bleach and 20 cups of water.
- Re-cap or plug the well opening and wait 30 minutes.
- Turn off and drain the hot water heater, chlorine is not effective in water above 105 °Fahrenheit.
- Restore power to your well pump, open all of the faucets in your home, and allow the water to run until there is a noticeable smell of chlorine.
- Turn off all of the faucets and allow the chlorine to disinfect the plumbing for at least twelve hours.
- After disinfecting the plumbing, open all of the faucets to flush out the chlorine water from your plumbing and well tank. Flush the water system until there is no chlorine smell. This may take up to 15 minutes.
- Turn on your water heater.
- If you have any filtration systems attached to your plumbing, be sure to replace all carbon filters after this disinfection process.
- Contact a licensed well contractor or your local county health department if you have any questions about this process.



Contact your County Health Department for more information about testing and disinfection.

Additional Resources:

For more information on water, explore the following links below:

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/water/privatewells.html>

- <http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/well/>
- www.wellowner.org
- www.groundwateradventurers.org
- www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/private
- www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells
- www.epa.gov/safewater/faq
- www.dep.state.fl.us/water/groundwater/



Your Private Well



What Every Owner Needs To Know:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Do's and Don'ts of Wells
- How to Disinfect Your Well



Private Well Information:

As a resident of Florida, we are fortunate to have a large source of fresh ground water that is naturally clean and free of contaminants.

This water comes from rain water that is filtered through the sand, soil, and the cracks in the rocks that lie beneath the earth's surface. This naturally filtered water fills large underground areas called aquifers. These aquifers are Florida's main source of drinking water.

Unfortunately, chemicals and microorganisms that may cause illness can leach into the ground water and possibly contaminate a well. Sources of these contaminants may come from animal waste, poorly maintained septic systems, nearby livestock areas and farmlands, poorly built wells, and flooding. Dangerous chemicals can seep into the ground water from leaking gasoline storage tanks, over-use of pesticides and fertilizers, landfills, illegal dumping of hazardous wastes, and storm water run-off.

Did you know?

There are many of areas of known groundwater contamination in Florida.



Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: If I do not smell or taste anything bad in my well water, it is safe, right?

A: You cannot tell from appearance, smell and taste alone. Most harmful contaminants are colorless, odorless, and tasteless.

Q: If no one becomes sick after drinking my well water, it is safe, right?

A: Just because nobody has become ill after drinking your well water does not mean your well water is free of contaminants. Some contaminants may take many years of building up in your body to make you sick.

Q: If my well passed inspection and a water test when it was first constructed, then it is still safe to drink?

A: Well water quality can change in a short amount of time, so it's recommended to have your well water tested on at least a yearly basis.

Q: Since my well water comes from a natural source, is my water considered safer than water from a utility?

A: Large water systems such as municipal utilities are monitored routinely and tested by state officials and utility personnel. If a problem is discovered, licensed water system operators will take the necessary measures to correct the problem.

Q: Will testing my water be expensive?

A: Typically, the cost for bacteria and nitrate testing ranges from \$20-50 if you collect the sample and drop it off at the laboratory, but may cost up to \$60-100 if you want a professional to collect the samples for you.

Dos and Don'ts of Well Ownership:

Dos:

- Have your well water tested once a year for bacteria and nitrate and other contaminants if you are in an area of concern.
- Make sure your well's sanitary seal is intact and watertight.
- Routinely check your wellhead and above ground pipes for cracks, leaks, and corrosion.
- If your wellhead is underground, mark the location with a permanent stake or an above ground marker.
- Keep the area around your well clean, clear, and well-maintained.
- Unused wells on your property must be properly abandoned by a licensed well contractor.
- Maintain equipment such as water softeners, and iron and carbon filters according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Have your septic tank pumped and inspected every 3 to 5 years.
- Keep a log of all inspections and tests on your well and septic system.

Don'ts:

- Don't pour hazardous chemicals down household drains or onto the ground.
- Don't mix or store pesticides, fertilizers, fuels or other chemicals in your well house or near your well.
- Don't drain water softener or washing machine waste water near your well.
- Don't dump any type of waste in a dry or abandoned well.
- Don't let rainfall puddle around your well.