



Assuring safe drinking water

Every year there are instances of contaminated drinking water in Lake County. Private water wells should be tested at least annually to see if the water meets drinking water standards.

Water well owners can have their well water tested for:

- Bacteria
- Nitrates
- Fluoride
- Lead
- Hardness
- Iron
- Total dissolved solids

For a complete list of available tests, call the Lake County Health Department at (847) 377-8020.

Environmental Health

500 W. Winchester Road
Libertyville, IL 60048
Phone: (847) 377-8020

Hours

Monday	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Thursday	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Friday	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Lake County Health Department
and Community Health Center

Web: health.lakecountyil.gov



Private Water Well Testing



Coliform Bacteria

Coliform bacteria are common in soil and surface waters. When coliform bacteria are present in groundwater, that may mean that sewage or surface water are contaminating the water supply. When there are coliform bacteria in drinking water, there may also be other more harmful bacteria present.

Some types of coliform bacteria, such as *E. coli*, can cause serious illness. *E. coli* is a type of fecal coliform bacteria lives in the intestines of humans and animals.

If your water contains coliform bacteria, do not use the water for drinking, brushing your teeth, or washing foods that will not be cooked. If *E. coli* is present, body contact with the water is not advised. The Health Department will inspect the well for damage or flooding in these cases.

When coliform bacteria are found, the water well and plumbing system must be chlorinated, preferably by a licensed water well contractor. After the water well has been disinfected, the chlorine must be flushed from the water well. A new water sample will then be collected.

Test your water well at least annually! For information, call (847) 377-8020.

Pick up sterile test bottles at the Central Permit Facility in Libertyville. Fill the test bottle and return it to the Environmental Laboratory. Results are available in about a week.

Nitrates

Nitrates occur naturally in soil and water. They can also get into water from animal or human waste and fertilizer. Although uncommon in Lake County, high nitrate levels may mean your well is exposed to contaminants, such as fertilizers.

Nitrate concentrations greater than **10 milligrams per liter** can be harmful to infants. If an infant consumes too many nitrates, they may develop blue baby syndrome. Blue baby syndrome happens when the blood is not able to transport oxygen, causing asphyxiation. Blue baby syndrome can be fatal.

If an infant or a pregnant mother lives in the household, test for nitrates at least once a year.

Fluoride

City water suppliers add fluoride to drinking water to promote dental health. Fluoride also occurs naturally in groundwater. In some areas, natural fluoride levels may be higher than in the community water supply.

Some people who drink water with high levels of fluoride may develop problems with their bones and teeth over time. Too much fluoride may cause dental fluorosis, which is a brown staining and/or pitting of the permanent teeth. This especially affects children. It can be made worse if children who drink well water are also given fluoride supplements.

If you have a private water well, have the fluoride level tested before giving your child a fluoride supplement.

Lead

Lead can cause damage to the brain, kidneys, nervous system, and red blood cells. **Even low amounts of lead can be harmful.** According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency Safe Drinking Water Act, lead in drinking water should not exceed **15 parts per billion.**

Household plumbing materials are the most common source of lead in drinking water. Water may wear on the metals in pipes or soldered joints, causing lead to leach into your tap water. Older plumbing materials, such as copper pipes soldered with lead, typically contain lead. Since 1988, only “lead free” pipe solder and flux are allowed in drinking water systems.