



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT GROUNDWATER

1. Test and maintain your well and septic system

Maintain your well and septic system, and **test your well annually** for nitrates and bacteria (total coliform and *E. coli*). Test immediately if your water's color, taste, or odor changes. Contact a laboratory or plumber for well testing options, costs, and instructions.

Follow Department of Natural Resources and Department of Health Services recommendations for treating contaminated wells.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Information on identifying and fixing well water problems, well records search, testing information, lists of licensed well contractors, and lists of water testing labs. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Wells/homeowners.html>

UW-Stevens Point Water and Environmental Analysis Lab: Well testing information and instructional video, Well Water 101 slides, WI Well Water Quality Viewer (online map). <https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/weal>

UW-Madison Division of Extension To pick up well testing kits for the UW-Stevens Point lab and learn more about groundwater in southwest Wisconsin:

- Grant County: 608-723-2125 <https://grant.extension.wisc.edu/natural-resources/swigg/>
- Iowa County: 608-930-9850 <https://iowa.extension.wisc.edu/natural-resources/swigg/>
- Lafayette County: 608-776-4820 <https://lafayette.extension.wisc.edu/natural-resources/swigg>

County Health Departments may have well testing kits or provide free tests for pregnant women and new mothers

- Grant County: 608-723-6416 www.co.grant.wi.gov/
- Iowa County: 608-930-9870
www.iowacounty.org/departments/HealthDepartment/environmental-health
- Lafayette County: 608-776-4895
www.lafayettecountywi.org/healthdepartment/page/water-testing-lab

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Information about how septic systems work and how to maintain them: www.epa.gov/septic

2. Close and/or protect unused wells, sinkholes, or other surface openings (e.g. old mine shafts)

Southwest Wisconsin's fractured bedrock dissolves easily, causing sinkholes, springs, and caves. This allows water to move quickly and carry pollutants to groundwater. Any openings connecting the surface to the bedrock below could be a conduit for groundwater contamination.

County Conservation Departments: well abandonment funding and sinkhole remediation information:

- Grant County Conservation, Sanitation and Zoning Department: 608-723-6377, Ext. 4
www.co.grant.wi.gov/
- Iowa County Land Conservation Department: 608-930-9891
www.iowacounty.org/departments/landconservation
- Lafayette County Land Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department 608-776-3836
www.lafayettecountywi.org/lcpz/page/land-conservation

Wisconsin Geological & Natural History Survey

To learn more about geology and groundwater in Wisconsin: <https://wgnhs.wisc.edu/>

3. Carefully manage chemicals and waste

What you spray, spread, dump, rinse, or flush might find a pathway to groundwater. Careful and efficient use, and proper disposal, of household and agricultural fertilizers, pesticides, animal waste, and other types of chemicals and waste can reduce contamination risks.

Household hazardous waste disposal guidance:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Waste/HouseholdHW.html>

Find a Clean Sweep hazardous waste collection near you:

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/CleanSweepSchedule.pdf>

Safe disposal of medications: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/safe-disposal.htm

Technical and financial assistance for agricultural cropland, livestock, manure management, and nutrient management practices:

- County Conservation Department (see contact info above)
- Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS):
www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wi/programs/financial/
Find your local service center: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>
- UW-Madison Division of Extension Agriculture Educators (see contact info above)
- UW-Madison Division of Extension resources: <https://cropsandsoils.extension.wisc.edu/>

