Have a question? 
Visit the wellcare® Hotline at 888-395-1033 📞 888-395-1033 FREE

1. It is important to test one’s well water annually for:
   a. Iron
   b. Hardness
   c. Sulfides
   d. Bacteria
   e. Nitrates
   f. d and e
   g. All of the above

2. A local health or environmental health department is a good place to start in checking on potential local groundwater contamination threats: True or False

3. One’s well may be dirty if:
   a. The water is cloudy
   b. The water flow into the well is slow
   c. There are taste and odor problems
   d. All of the above

4. Nitrates most commonly come from manufacturing sites: True or False

5. Total coliforms are tested in water because:
   a. These bacteria are hazardous to one’s health
   b. They are easy to grow in a lab test
   c. They are an indicator of possible pathogenic bacteria

Water well disinfection

Disinfection and a well inspection are recommended when one’s well water tests positive for microorganisms such as bacteria,
viruses, and protozoa (single-cell animals).

Wells are routinely tested for coliform bacteria—organisms in soil or vegetation, and in the intestinal tract of warm-blooded animals. Most coliforms are harmless. Their presence indicates whether the well environment can support disease-causing bacteria.

Some strains of E. coli are disease causing—even lethal. If a well tests positive for coliform bacteria, testing for E. coli may be prudent.

A water well should be disinfected:

- When the water tests positive for coliform bacteria
- After well construction
- After well servicing
- If there is a well-system defect that could allow bacteria into the well.

The National Ground Water Association recommends qualified water well professionals conduct system disinfections. Proper well disinfection involves chemistry and proper application techniques, so the potential is great for well owners to improperly disinfect their well systems.

Chlorine compounds are most commonly used to disinfect water wells. These compounds can be a breathing or explosion hazard. Also, NGWA recommends household bleach not be used to chlorinate wells for reasons including it is not made for use in drinking water.

Recurring bacteria could indicate:

- A breach in the well system’s sanitary seals
- A nearby contamination source such as a failing septic system or an animal feedlot
- The need for a well cleaning.

If bacteria is recurring in your water, consult with a qualified water well system contractor on how to proceed.

**What do you know?**

It is important that private well owners take a little time to learn about how to be a good steward of their water well systems, which includes testing the water and acting to improve water quality if necessary.

Here’s a short quiz to test your knowledge:

- d. b and c
- e. All of the above

[See the answers below]

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**Environmental health news**

PrivateWellClass.org is launching an email newsletter for environmental health professionals who work with well owners. This monthly publication will include helpful well care resources, collaboration opportunities, and early updates on Private Well Class programming. Become a partner by visiting [http://privatewellclass.org/partners](http://privatewellclass.org/partners).

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**Quiz answers:**

(1) f  (2) True  (3) d  (4) False  (5) d
Add the sender ngwa@ngwa.org to your safe sender list to be sure you don't miss any future announcements.

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