Do You Know What’s In Your Well WATER?

Have you tested for arsenic?

- You can’t see, smell, or taste arsenic, yet most people are exposed to low levels of arsenic through water, food, and other sources.
- In many areas of New Hampshire (NH), arsenic occurs naturally in the bedrock and moves into the groundwater supplying private wells.
- If you have a private well, test your drinking water and take action if your well has arsenic above 5 parts per billion (ppb).

What’s being done about it?
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency set a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 10 ppb for arsenic in 2001. However, growing scientific research shows arsenic has long-term health effects even at lower doses, so the state of NH reduced the MCL for public water systems to 5 ppb in 2019. The state does not regulate private wells.

Arsenic is linked to:
- Increased risk of bladder and other cancers
- Increased blood pressure
- Diabetes that occurs during pregnancy
- Harmful changes to the body’s hormones
- Altered immune system response to lung infections

Why 5 ppb?

What does this mean for private well users?
The new arsenic standard (5 ppb) for public water systems is more protective of long-term health. We recommend that private well users follow this guideline, too.
Do you have a private well?
Since you can’t see, taste, or smell arsenic, the only way to know what is in your water is to TEST it every 3-5 years. Tests range in price -- you can just test for arsenic or do a comprehensive test.

**Test Your Drinking Water**

- What should I test for, and how often should I test?
- Order a test from the NH State Lab or an accredited water testing lab.

**Understand Your Results**

Use the Be Well Informed guide to understand your water test results and access information on water treatment choices and health concerns.

**Treat Your Drinking Water**

- Use an alternative source of water and/or find out more about purchasing a water treatment system specific to your water chemistry. For more information and resources:
  - Be Well Informed
  - Arsenic and You
  - Call the NH Department of Environmental Services Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at 603-271-2513.
- Please note that boiling your water will not remove arsenic.

Why was the MCL Lowered? Read the FAQ