

## OTHER WAYS YOU CAN PROTECT GROUNDWATER

- Avoid pouring or storing chemicals near the well.
- Check for potential contamination sources such as fertilizers, septic systems, underground storage tanks, paint or petroleum products, etc.
- Do not dispose of hazardous chemicals in your septic system and have your septic system pumped every 3-5 years.
- Ensure that flood waters do not submerge the wellhead. If flooding occurs around the well, test for bacteria contamination.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Indiana State Department of Health**  
[www.in.gov/isdh/26973.htm](http://www.in.gov/isdh/26973.htm)

**IN Department of Natural Resources**  
[www.in.gov/dnr/water/2457.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/water/2457.htm)

**US Environmental Protection Agency**  
[www.epa.gov/privatewells](http://www.epa.gov/privatewells)

**National Ground Water Association**  
[www.ngwa.org](http://www.ngwa.org)

**Private Well Class**  
[privatewellclass.org/](http://privatewellclass.org/)



**MARION COUNTY  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT**

**Prevent. Promote. Protect.**

**WATER QUALITY &  
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT**  
3901 Meadows Dr.  
Indianapolis, IN 46205

317-221-2147  
<http://marionhealth.org/private-well-program>

## PRIVATE WELL WATER TESTING

*Free Drinking Water Testing  
for Residents of Marion County*



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## WHY TEST?

Well water is unregulated, and most contaminants are colorless and odorless. The only way to know if the water is safe is to test! As a private well owner, **YOU** are responsible for the quality of your drinking water.

### COMMON CONTAMINANTS IN MARION COUNTY

- Coliform Bacteria is very common - about 40% of wells sampled test positive for bacteria.
- Arsenic is naturally occurring and comes from shale in the bedrock; about 18% of samples are elevated, or have unsafe levels of arsenic.
- Nitrates can come from fertilizers, sewage or erosion of natural deposits. They can pose serious health problems in pregnant women and infants, such as blue baby syndrome.

## WHEN TO TEST?

- Annually for Bacteria and Anions.
- Every 3-5 years for Heavy Metals.
- If you notice a change in taste, color, or odor.
- If someone in the home has a sudden or unexplained illness.
- When flooding occurs near the well.
- If pregnant/nursing women or children live in the home.

## HOW TO TEST?

1. Call the Marion County Public Health Department at 317-221-2147 to request MCPHD staff to test your well water at no cost to you.

—OR—

2. Purchase bottles from MCPHD Lab at 3838 N Rural St. for \$10 per bottle. (Ex. Bacteria, Anions, and Metals tests are \$30 total.) Call 317-221-4671 for details.

## MCPHD TESTS FOR:

- Bacteria (E. coli and Total Coliform)
- Anions (Nitrate, Nitrite, Chloride, Fluoride, Sulfate, Phosphate)
- Heavy Metals (Arsenic, Lead, Mercury, Cadmium, Chromium, Iron, Manganese, Copper, Hardness, et al)
- VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds, including petroleum products and industrial chemicals) Note: this can only be sampled by MCPHD staff.

## WHAT IF MY WATER IS UNSAFE TO DRINK?

MCPHD will send a final report that shows the levels in your drinking water compared to any health standards.

It is not the policy of MCPHD to 'condemn' wells or require treatment system installation for owner-occupied homes, but instead offer recommendations for treatment. For example, if bacteria are present, MCPHD can provide step-by-step instructions on how to disinfect your well, and then offer to re-test.

## WELL MAINTENANCE

- Visually inspect the well head including the casing, well cap, and electrical conduit throughout the year.
- Ensure the well cap is intact and secured to the wellhead.
- Maintain water treatment systems per the manufacturer's recommendations, including change out any filters and membranes as needed.

