



# ADAMS COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NATIONAL GROUNDWATER AWARENESS WEEK

March 8th-14th is National Groundwater Awareness Week. Groundwater is part of the water cycle. When it rains or when snow melts, water seeps into pores and cracks in the soil and is stored underground. Groundwater can become unsafe when pollution enters from things like septic tanks, pesticides, fertilizers or natural rocks. Forty percent of Wisconsin residents get their drinking water from private wells. Maintenance and protection of a private well is the responsibility of the person that owns the home or property.

Adams County Health & Human Services Department has multiple well water test kit packages available.

- Households with a pregnant woman or child under the age of one year may be eligible for a fee-exempt kit that tests for bacteria, nitrates, fluoride and metals.
- Bacteria Kits are \$20 and test for coliform bacteria. Bacteria in a well can cause diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, cramps or fever. Young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to be impacted. The only way to know if your private well has bacteria is to test.
- Nitrate Kits are \$20. The only way to know if your private well has nitrate is to test. Nitrate is one of the most common groundwater contaminants in Wisconsin. High levels of nitrate in drinking water can affect everyone. Nitrate may cause Blue Baby Syndrome (which affects how our blood carries oxygen), birth defects, thyroid disease or colon cancer. When nitrate levels are high, everyone should avoid drinking the water and preparing foods using the contaminated well water. You should take action if nitrate levels are above 10 milligrams per liters (mg/L).
- Homeowner Kits are available to any Adams County resident for a fee of \$2.00 which covers the cost of the bottle. The homeowner can select from a list of over 60 things to test for. All testing fees get paid to the lab and are the responsibility of the homeowner. You can also receive a homeowner test kit for free by contacting UW-Extension in Adams County.

- Flood Kits test for bacteria (coliform and *E. Coli*) and are available to Adams County residents experiencing flooding ONLY if the well cap has been under water.

It is recommended to test your well once a year to make sure it is safe. To encourage residents to take action this National Groundwater Awareness Week, Adams County Health and Human Services is offering a special of when purchasing a bacteria kit for \$20, you will receive a nitrate kit for FREE! Please make sure to call in advance for an appointment to ensure water sample bottle availability. Contact Adams County Health & Human Services Department at 608-339-4505.

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