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Governor

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GROUNDWATER STEWARDSHIP FOR HEALTH AND PROTECTION

Since spring is a good time of the year to have your water well checked before the peak water use season begins, March 8 – 14, 2015 is National Groundwater Awareness Week. In Indiana, 3 million Hoosiers rely on groundwater-supplied community drinking water systems while another 1 million rely on private individual water wells, which combined is approximately 60% of the state's population – reason enough to act to protect groundwater. Groundwater is the water that soaks into the soil from rain or snow and moves downward to fill cracks and other openings in beds of rocks and sand. It is an abundant natural resource - of all the freshwater in the world (excluding polar ice caps), 95 percent is groundwater. Surface water (lakes and rivers) only make up 3 percent of our freshwater.

The common questions that ISDH's Environmental Public Health Division receives regarding water well sampling are when to test and what to test for.

When to test:

- Annually
- New well or re-activating a well that has been out of service for more than 6 months
- Whenever there is a change in taste, odor, or appearance of the water
- After flooding
- After a repair; or damage, such as a broken cap
- In the event of any family members having recurring gastro-intestinal illnesses

What to test for:

- Bacteria – Total/Fecal Coliform (present/absent)
- Nitrates
- Anything of local concern (e.g., arsenic, radon)
- Constituents that cause problems with plumbing, staining, water appearance, and odor (e.g., iron, manganese, water hardness, and sulfides)

To protect groundwater from contamination sources in and around a drinking water wellhead, in addition to following setbacks outlined in state and local onsite sewage system regulations, it is recommended to:

- Keep hazardous chemicals, such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides, and motor oil far away from the well.
- Maintain a "clean" zone of at least 50 feet between the well and any kennels.
- Periodically check the well cover or well cap on top of the well casing to ensure it is in good repair and securely attached. Its seal should keep out insects and rodents.
- Keep your well records in a safe place. These include the construction well log report, and annual water well system maintenance and water testing results.

Overall, an annual well checkup is the best way to ensure problem-free service and water quality. For more information, please visit www.eph.in.gov or contact:

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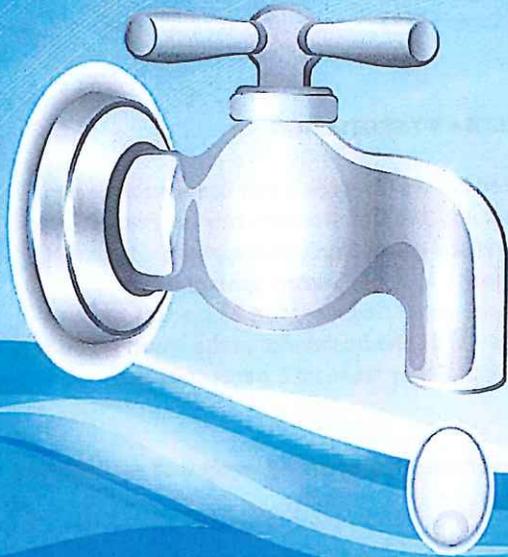


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To promote and provide
essential public health services.

National Groundwater Awareness Week

March 8-14, 2015



What is groundwater?

It's the water that fills cracks, voids, and other openings in soil, sand, and bedrock.

Why is it important?

Persons with wells use groundwater for drinking water. Also, most groundwater flows directly into streams, rivers, and lakes from beneath.

How much is there?

About 98 percent of the available freshwater on Earth is groundwater.

Protect this precious resource!

- 1** If you own a water well, have your water tested yearly. Also test if there is a change in the odor, taste, or smell.
- 2** Don't overapply pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. Use them in the recommended amounts.
- 3** When you're handling hazardous substances, do so over cement to avoid groundwater infiltration or runoff into surface water from accidental spills.
- 4** Don't dispose of any hazardous substances by dumping them on the ground, pouring them down the drain, or flushing them down the toilet. Contact local waste authorities about proper disposal of hazardous substances such as:
 - Pesticides/herbicides
 - Fertilizer
 - Paint/paint thinner
 - Oil
 - Antifreeze
 - Chemicals.
- 5** If you own a septic tank, have it cleaned and serviced every two years to prevent a breakdown that could pollute your groundwater.

national
groundwater

awareness week
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