

FAQs for Private Well Water Testing

- 1. Why should I test my well?** Contaminants such as bacteria, nitrate, arsenic and other metals can be found in private wells. Unfortunately you cannot see, smell or taste most of them. Unlike municipal water systems, there is no law requiring testing of private wells, except when it is first drilled or when the well casing is opened up for pump repair. Homeowners are responsible for making sure their well water is safe to drink.
- 2. What should I test my well for and how often?** Test for bacteria and nitrate annually. Nitrate especially if there are children consuming the water and/or pregnant and nursing mothers. Metals (full metals panel, including arsenic) if you never tested your well previously. Every well should be tested at least once for arsenic. If arsenic is present at any amount, retest annually thereafter.
- 3. What can I do if my well tests are above the levels they should be?** Call the Health Department at 608-785-9872 for questions about your test results, water treatment options, well repair and well replacement.
- 4. How much does it cost to test?** Tests available at La Crosse County Health Department are listed below. Samples may also be submitted to the WI State Lab of Hygiene or other Wisconsin certified labs. Contact your local health department for more details.

Bacteria	\$26
Nitrate	\$26
Arsenic	\$29
Metals (includes arsenic)	\$80



Bacteria and/or nitrate Arsenic Metals

- 5. What is the process or instructions for testing my well water in La Crosse County?**
 - A.** Pick up your well water test kit in an approved La Crosse County Health Department (LCHD) test bottle or bottles, depending on what you are testing your water for (See picture above for bottle/sample type). Follow the attached instructions on your test bottle. Arsenic only and metal panel test each require a separate bottle. Bacteria and nitrate can both be tested from the same bottle (arsenic and metals must be in a separate "metals" or "arsenic" bottle).
 - B.** Samples can only be dropped off at LCHD from 8am-4pm on Monday – Thursday. (Our lab is CLOSED on Fridays and we cannot accept samples).
 - C.** Payment **MUST** be made at the time you submit your samples to LCHD.
- 6. My neighbor tested their well and their results were fine, so mine should be safe too?** All wells need testing, so do not rely on the results of your neighbor's test. Levels can vary from house to house. Testing your water is the first step to keeping your family safe. If your water tests positive for contaminants, there are reliable treatment options to address it!
- 7. Where can I find additional information and resources?** La Crosse County Health Department website:
<http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/health/home.asp>

Phone: 608-785-9872 Address: 300 4th St N, La Crosse, WI 54601

Bottle Pick Up: Mon-Fri 8:00AM-4:30PM

Sample Drop Off: Mon-Thurs 8:00AM-4:00PM

- WI Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wells/>
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website: <https://www.epa.gov/privatewells>
- University of WI Stevens Point website: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/watershed/Pages/default.aspx>
- Water Systems Council (WSC) Hotline: 1888-395-1033 Website: www.watersystemscouncil.org