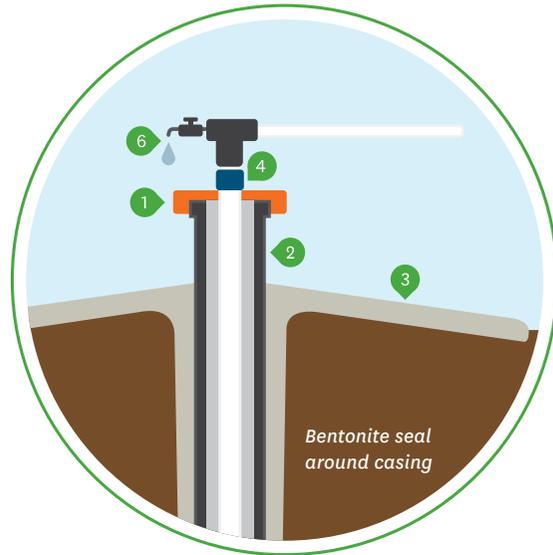


For a secure well head, follow these steps below:



> STEP 1

1 Well cap

Install a secure well cap and seal between the casing and any hoses or cables going down the well.

> STEP 2

2 Well casing

Ensure the well casing is elevated at least half a metre above the ground surface.

> STEP 3

3 Concrete apron

Seal between the well casing and the surrounding ground with a concrete apron. If you're drilling a new well, install a bentonite seal around the casing.

> STEP 4

4 Backflow preventer

Install a back-flow preventer to stop contaminants siphoning back into your well.

> STEP 5

5 Area around well

Keep the area around the well head clear of animals, pesticides, fertilisers, compost and rubbish.

> STEP 6

6 Sample point

Have your groundwater supply tested if you suspect a problem with the water quality.

Test your water

Testing can be as easy as turning on the tap, taking a sample and sending it to a laboratory for analysis.

You should test your water supply for E. coli at least four times per year, as well as annually for nitrate. Use a clean container and send your sample to a laboratory for analysis.

Ministry of Health approved laboratories that can test for E. Coli and nitrate:

- Citilabs
- Eurofins
- Hills Chemistry

Need more information?

To find out more
www.health.govt.nz/water
www.cph.co.nz
www.ecan.govt.nz/drinkingwater
or visit your local council's website



Do you get your household water from a private well?

If you do, it's up to you to check the water is safe to use.

Testing your water

There is potential for a range of contaminants to reach groundwater. Testing for these is important because drinking contaminated water can have serious health consequences.



BACTERIA AND VIRUSES

Source: Primarily faecal material from grazing animals or septic systems; or from farm effluent spread on the land

Recommended testing regime: Quarterly (following rainfall where possible)



NITRATES

Source: Farming activities, wastewater disposal and landfills

Recommended testing regime: Annually (during Spring, when nitrate levels tend to be higher)



HEAVY METALS AND ORGANIC CHEMICALS

Source: (Heavy metals - cadmium, lead, arsenic etc) Sheep dips and pesticides in some farming and horticulture areas (arsenic can occur naturally in some areas)

Source: (Organic chemicals - including petroleum compounds, solvents and other chemicals) Engine and machinery shops, other industries and landfills

Recommended testing regime: One-off test for a full range of heavy metals and organic chemicals (more expensive than other testing regimes but only needs to be done once)

Water testing is not the only thing you need to do to protect your drinking water

Where a well emerges from the ground is known as the well head. It is very important that this area is protected to prevent bacteria and chemicals getting inside the well and contaminating the water.

The diagram on the overleaf illustrates a best case example of a secure well head. If your well head arrangement does not look like this and water testing detects contaminants, you should seek advice on how you might alter or replace your well head to prevent bacteria and chemicals passing through the well head and into your water supply.

Purchasing a property

If you are purchasing a property it is up to you to determine whether it has public water supply or its own private well. It is your responsibility to ensure you've got access to a clean supply of drinking water.

Previous land use

If you have a private well you should investigate what previous activities on the land might have had an influence on your well. Sheep dipping or horticultural spraying might have caused chemicals to leach into the soil and ground water. These can be harmful to your health so it is a good idea to have your well tested before you use its water.



Q & A

How is testing done?

Generally this is a straight forward procedure. Contact a water research laboratory and they will provide you with everything you need to collect a sample. Once you have got a sample return it to the laboratory for analysis.

How are samples collected?

In most cases, samples can be taken from a kitchen tap.

Who pays for testing?

Testing private wells for contamination is the responsibility of property owners.

If a well is found to be contaminated - what then?

Environment Canterbury can put you in touch with the appropriate agencies.

Where can more information be found?

Contact Environment Canterbury on 0800 324 636 (0800 EC INFO).