# Have you tested your well water for arsenic?



## Your water looks, smells and tastes fine. So why do you need to test it?

It is hard to believe that water that looks, smells and tastes fine may not be safe to drink. But the truth is that 1 in 10 wells in Maine has water that is high in arsenic. There are wells high in arsenic in all parts of Maine.

## Protect your family. Test your well for arsenic every 3 to 5 years.

### How to Test Your Well Water

**1. Call a lab.**

- Call a certified lab and ask for an arsenic test kit for your well water. You can find a lab at this website: wellwater.maine.gov. Or call the Maine Lab Certification Officer at 207-287-1929.
- If you have never tested your well water for bacteria, nitrites and nitrates, or other chemicals like radon, uranium and flouride, ask your lab for a test kit for all of these.

**2. Do the test.**

- Your test kit will arrive in the mail. It will have empty bottles, directions and forms to fill out.
- Follow the directions and mail the bottles back to the lab with the forms.

**3. Get your results.**

- Your test results will come to you in the mail.
- If you have too much arsenic in your water, or if you are not sure you understand your test results, call 866-292-3474 (toll-free in Maine) or 207-287-4311 to speak to an expert.

### Why Arsenic is Bad

People who drink water with too much arsenic for many years are more likely to get cancer. Arsenic can cause skin, bladder and lung cancers.

It may cause low birthweight and affect brain development in babies if pregnant women drink water with too much arsenic in it. Arsenic can also affect brain development in young children. Other problems from drinking water with very high arsenic levels include: stomach pain, nausea, diarrhea, numbness or tingling in the hands and feet and changes in skin.

Your chance of having any of these health problems depends on:

- how much arsenic is in your water;
- how much water you drink;
- how long you have been drinking the water.

### Solving Arsenic Problems

There are actions you can take to protect your family if your water has too much arsenic. First, you can switch to bottled water for drinking and making drinks. This will allow you time to decide if you want to install a water treatment system.

Call us at 866-292-3474 (toll-free in Maine) or 207-287-4311 if you have high arsenic. We can help you decide how to solve the problem.

**Protect your family. Test your well.**

- For more information: wellwater.maine.gov
- Call for advice: **866-292-3474 • TTY: Call Maine Relay 711**

March 2020



SMA