



drinking water

keeping it safe for all of us

MINNESOTA
MDH
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Safe drinking water

is no accident. Many drinking water experts from federal, state, and local governments as well as other environmental groups work to protect this valuable resource. It depends on many people, including **you**, to keep it this way.

In this guide, you will learn:

- 💧 Where your drinking water comes from,
- 💧 How your health is protected by testing and treating drinking water, and
- 💧 What you can do to help protect safe drinking water now and for the future.

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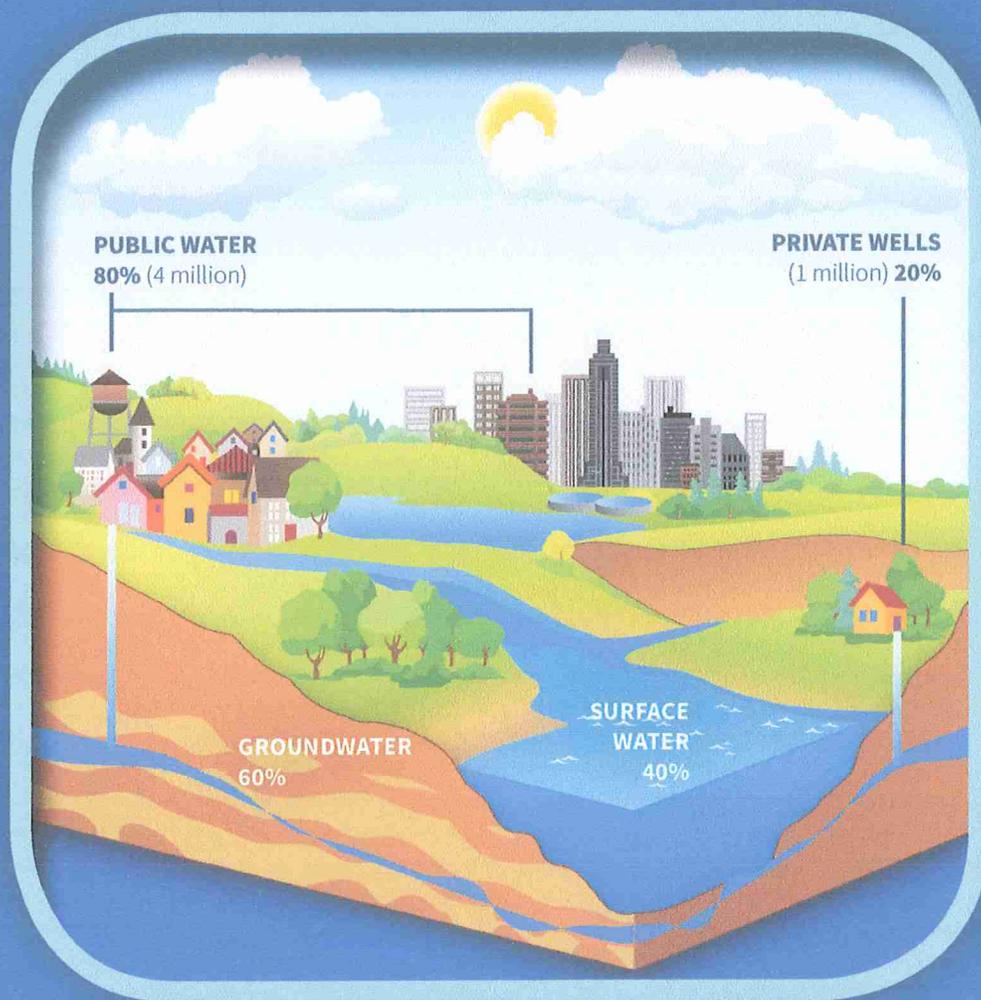
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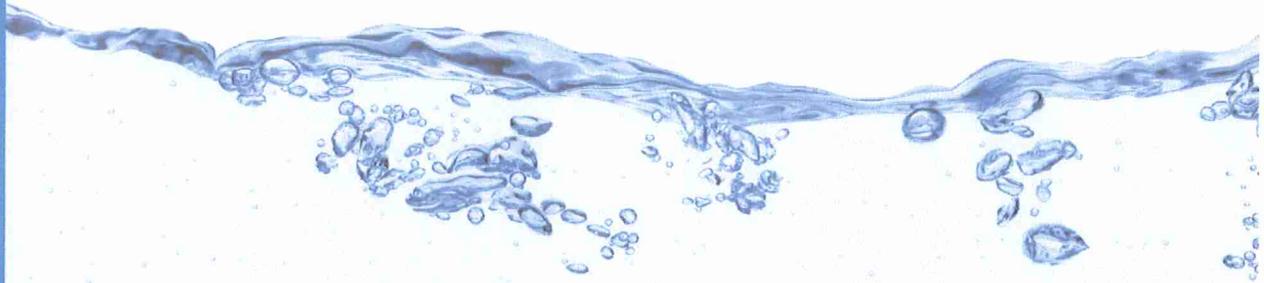


Minnesota is the “Land of 10,000 Lakes ...”

but we get most of our drinking water from groundwater and rivers. Minnesota also has a few unusual sources of water like quarries and former mine pits.

Drinking Water Comes from Rivers, Lakes, and Aquifers

Drinking water comes from surface water or groundwater. **Surface water** is water from lakes and rivers. **Groundwater** is water taken from an aquifer — a natural underground layer of sand, gravel, or porous rock, that contains water.



Drinking Water: Public Water Supply or Private Well

Safe drinking water is essential to our lives, whether it comes from a public water supply or private well.

Minnesota's **public water supplies** provide water to people in their homes and where they work or play — schools, factories, and resorts. Public water supplies are regulated by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), while the supplier manages the system. The water supply must meet standards of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

A **private well** is another way Minnesotans get their drinking water. The construction of private wells is regulated by MDH, which requires a water test when a new well is constructed. After that, the well owner must protect and maintain the well to make sure that the well continues to provide safe drinking water.

Drinking Water Must Be Tested to Make Sure it is Safe

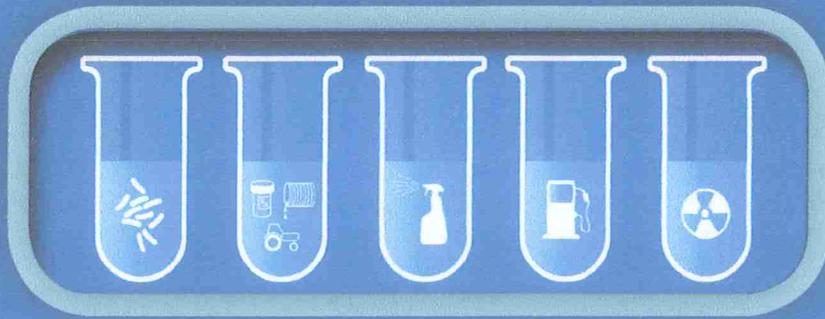
Public water supplies are regularly tested for more than 100 contaminants that can cause concern for people's health such as bacteria, nitrate, pesticides, solvents, and metals. MDH or the public water supplier collects the required water samples.

Private well owners are responsible for testing their own drinking water, except for samples collected when a new well is constructed. It is important to test the water from your well because it could contain bacteria or other contaminants that can harm the health of you and your family. Proper maintenance is also important.



The federal Safe Drinking Water Act was passed in 1974. The law protects the nation's public water supply. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and MDH work together to keep our water safe.

Did you know that you can find out more about your public water supply? The Consumer Confidence Report includes information about the source of the water and testing and monitoring results. Ask your public water supplier or check their website.



MDH recommends testing your well water for:

Coliform bacteria every year,

Nitrate every couple of years, and

Arsenic at least once.

You should have your well water tested if anyone in your household becomes pregnant or if a baby may be fed formula made with water from your well.



Testing your private well water is simple.

Contact your county health or environmental program for testing information and instructions.