Water testing and treatment

A lot of contaminants aren't visible, so regularly get your water tested to ensure it is safe to use. If there are changes in water colour, odour, taste or a sudden cloudy appearance, get it tested again, as it could suggest that your water is contaminated and unsafe to use. Contact an independently accredited IANZ laboratory to get a water sample tested.

If the sampling results do show your water is contaminated, or for peace of mind, there are a range of treatment options available that can remove or reduce contaminants.

Where can I get more information?

Greater Wellington Regional Council
Helpdesk: 0800 496 734
www.gw.govt.nz/private-water-supplies

Regional Public Health
www.rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/drinking-water/

Water Quality
www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/drinking-water/household-water-supplies

Water Testing
www.ianz.govt.nz/services/accreditation-2/accreditation/laboratories/drinking-water/

Bore Security and Water Safety
www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/securegroundwater-bores-and-wells-safe-household-water

greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Pane Matua Taiao

Private Water Supplies –

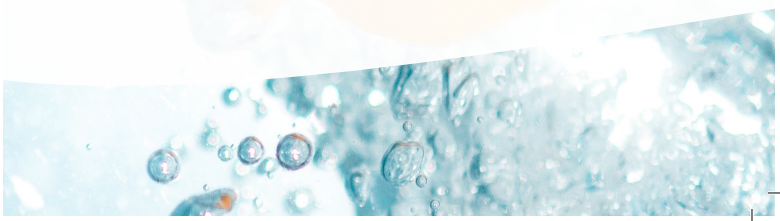
HOW SAFE IS YOUR DRINKING WATER?

Does your water come from a well, roof or a stream?

If the water your household drinks, bathes in and uses for food preparation comes from a private water supply, you are responsible for making sure that the water is safe for use.

This means if you have a ground water well, roof rainwater collection tank or get your water from a stream, river, lake or spring, you need to understand how to make sure it is safe.

Drinking unsafe water can cause illness (such as vomiting and diarrhoea). This can potentially be life-threatening for infants, the elderly or people with weak immune systems.



Where does your water come from?

GROUNDWATER WELLS

Rain or river water that seeps into the earth becomes groundwater. Groundwater quality is influenced by the geology it flows through. The filter of soil and gravel may remove some surface impurities but it can also add natural impurities to your well water supply.

Chemicals and bacteria from landfills, stormwater drains, septic or fuel tanks or overlying farming and gardening, can also flow with the water as it moves from the earth's surface into groundwater and your well.

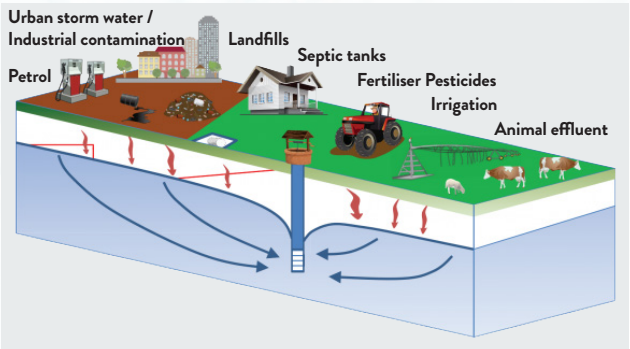


Image: Sources of groundwater contamination

STREAM, RIVER OR SPRING

Streams, rivers, lakes and springs become unsafe when chemicals and bacteria flow into them through a stormwater pipe or run-off from land. Unlike groundwater, surface water isn't filtered by the soil.

ROOF RAINWATER COLLECTION TANK WATER SUPPLIES

Roof water may become unsafe when leaf litter, debris, animal droppings, dead animals and insects build up in gutters or tanks. Water quality may also be affected by:

- lead flashings or roof paint
- ash from household fireplaces
- chemical spray drift (from agricultural and horticultural practices)
- chemical residues from road vehicle emissions

How can you ensure your water is safe to drink?

GROUNDWATER WELLS

Keep wells maintained and clear of animals, pesticides, fertilisers, compost, rubbish, vegetation and effluent to prevent contamination.

Look into the history of your land, how the well works and has been built in case anything you find out may affect water quality. ALL bore-heads and well-heads must be secure (covered, sealed and maintained), to stop contamination of ANY groundwater, whatever it is used for. Your local driller will be able to inspect your bore and tell you whether it is secure and if not what needs to be done to make it secure.

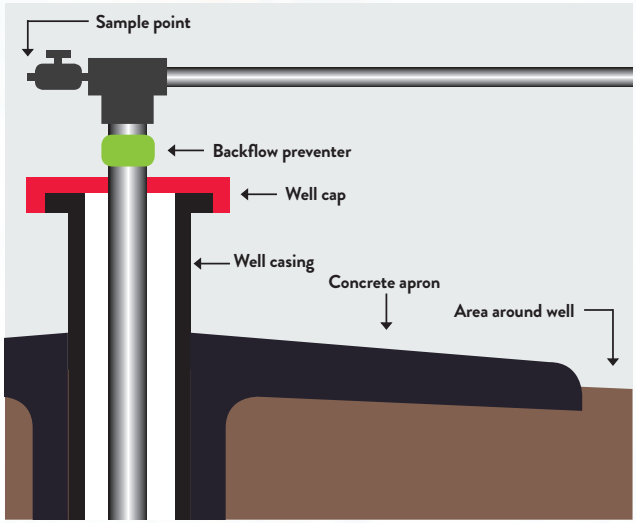


Image: A securely protected well head

STREAM, RIVER OR SPRING SUPPLIES

Fence off the area from animals to reduce chemicals and bacteria from entering the stream, river or spring. Collect water from parts of the river or stream where there is less impact from human activities or fewer animals.

ROOF RAINWATER COLLECTION TANKS

Check out the Ministry of Health's Water Collection Tanks and Safe Household Water guidelines for information on roof rainwater collection www.healthed.govt.nz.