Arsenic in Your Well Water

What to do if your well has too much arsenic.

Well Water Tipsheet 1



Switch to bottled water.

Finding out your well water has too much arsenic in it may cause you to worry. There are things you can do to protect your family from arsenic. The first thing to do is switch to bottled water for drinking and for making drinks such as coffee, tea, juice, and infant formula.

You can use this tipsheet to help you decide what to do next. Call the Maine CDC at 866-292-3474, tollfree in Maine, to speak to an expert about arsenic in your well water.

Is there too much arsenic in your water?

Your test results will have a number then the letters "ug/L" or "mg/L." These letters are units of measurement, like pounds and ounces.

Your water has too much arsenic if your test result is above 10 ug/L or 0.01 mg/L.

If your result is higher than these numbers, follow the advice below.

If your result is between 10 and 50 ug/L or 0.01 and 0.05 mg/L

- Don't drink your water or use it to make drinks like coffee, tea, juice, or infant formula.
- You can use your water to cook and other uses.

If your result is above 50 ug/L or 0.05 mg/L

- Don't drink your water or use it to make drinks like coffee, tea, juice, or infant formula.
- Don't use your water to make soups and stews, or to cook dried foods such as rice, beans, oatmeal and pasta. These foods absorb a lot of water during cooking.
- You can use your water for other uses such as brushing teeth, bathing, washing dishes, and watering the garden.

If your result is above 100 ug/L or 0.1 mg/L

- Call 866-292-3474 to talk to an expert about your results.

Arsenic and Health

In most cases, you can protect yourself if you stop drinking water with too much arsenic in it. People who drink water with too much arsenic for many years are more likely to get cancer. Arsenic can cause skin, bladder, and lung cancer.

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.

Call 866-292-3474 to talk to an expert about health concerns.

Solving Arsenic Problems

One way to solve arsenic problems is to buy bottled water for drinking and cooking. Or you can install a water filtration system. There are two types:

Point of Use systems fit under the kitchen sink. This system is good if you are worried about drinking and cooking.

Point of Entry systems treat all the water in the house. You may want this kind of system if there are young children in your house.

To figure out which system is best for you, call 866-292-3474 to talk to an expert.

Protect your family. Test your well.

- For more information: wellwater.maine.gov
- Call for advice: **866-292-3474 • 207-287-4311 • TTY: 800-606-0215**

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
An Office of the Department of Health and Human Services