

FLUORIDE IN YOUR WELL WATER

Tips to Protect Your Well Water



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Private wells can provide a clean, safe source of water if they are properly located, built, and maintained. However, naturally occurring contaminants such as arsenic, fluoride, and uranium in the rocks and soil near your well can contaminate your well water. As a private well owner, it is your responsibility to make sure that your water is safe to use by testing for contaminants. This brochure provides information on fluoride and helps you understand your test results.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH CONCERNS?

Drinking low levels of fluoride can help prevent tooth decay; however, drinking high levels of fluoride can be unsafe. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that fluoride in drinking water should be below 4 milligrams per liter of water (mg/L) because years of exposure to high fluoride levels may cause bone diseases that can cause fractures, pain, and tenderness. Exposures to lower levels of fluoride may lead to staining and pitting of teeth, especially in children.

WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE THE FLUORIDE IN MY WATER?

Installing a NSF International certified treatment device can reduce the levels of fluoride in your water. Installing a reverse osmosis system can lower the amount of fluoride in your water by filtering it. Reverse osmosis systems that install under your kitchen sink cost between \$150 and \$400 and can be purchased at local hardware stores. Until you can install a treatment device, the EPA recommends using another source of water, such as bottled water, for drinking and cooking.

Note: Boiling water will not remove fluoride.

WHAT IS FLUORIDE?

Fluoride is a naturally-occurring compound that comes from fluorite mineral deposits found in rocks and soil. Fluoride can also be found in water that passes through rocks and soil that contain fluoride.

WHAT DO MY FLUORIDE LEVELS MEAN?

The chart below shows levels of fluoride in water and the amount of time an individual would need to drink that level of fluoride in order to experience the possible health effects.

Approximate Level of Fluoride	Amount of Time	Possible Health Effects
Between 0.7-1 mg/L	Lifetime	Best amount for good health
More than 2 mg/L	1 year or more	Chance of teeth staining (dental fluorosis)
More than 4 mg/L	More than 20 years	Increased risk of broken bones
More than 5 mg/L	More than 20 years	Chance of pain and tenderness in joints and bones (skeletal fluorosis)

HEALTH DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

Panhandle Health District

208-415-5200
www.phd1.idaho.gov
(serving Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Shoshone counties)

North Central Health District

208-799-3100
www.idahopublichealth.com
(serving Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, and Nez Perce counties)

Southwest District Health

208-455-5400
www.publichealthidaho.com
(serving Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette and Washington counties)

Central District Health

208-375-5211
www.cdhd.idaho.gov
(serving Ada, Boise, Elmore and Valley counties)

South Central Public Health District

208-737-5900
www.phd5.idaho.gov
(serving Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls counties)

Southeastern Idaho Public Health

208-233-9080
www.sdhdidaho.org
(serving Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Butte, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power counties)

Eastern Idaho Public Health District

208-522-0310
www.phd7.idaho.gov
(serving Bonneville, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison, and Teton counties)

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Licensed Well Drillers

www.idwr.idaho.gov/apps/well/licensedwelldrillers/

Ground Water Protection Section

Boise: 208-287-4800
www.idwr.idaho.gov

Northern Region, Coeur d'Alene: 208-769-1450

Eastern Region, Idaho Falls: 208-525-7161

Southern Region, Twin Falls: 208-736-3033

Western Region, Boise: 208-334-2190

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Water Program

Boise Office 208-332-8597
www.agri.state.id.us

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

Bureau of Community and Environmental Health

1-866-240-3553
www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov
bceh@dhw.idaho.gov

Idaho Bureau of Laboratories

208-334-2235
www.statelab.idaho.gov
statelab@dhw.idaho.gov

NSF INTERNATIONAL

Consumer Hotline 1-800-673-8010
www.nsf.org

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAINTAIN MY WATER SYSTEM?

If you install a reverse osmosis system, follow the manufacturer's suggested maintenance schedule to be sure your water is safe. Also, your well should be maintained to keep it in good working order. To help keep track of well maintenance, it is recommended that you create and maintain a "system maintenance log." The log should include the location of the well, construction and contractor details, as well as results of any water tests. A copy of a log is available by calling the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare at 1-866-240-3553.

For questions about your well water, contact your local public health district.

SUGGESTED TESTING SCHEDULE

The table below shows how often you should test your well for contaminants.

Contaminants	How often should I test?
Arsenic Uranium Fluoride	Once every 3 to 5 years
Bacteria Nitrates	Once a Year