A Fast Look from EHHI

A Drinking Water Checklist

Practical Steps for Private Wells & Public Water Systems

Clean drinking water is essential to good health. While the United States has one of the safest drinking water systems in the world, contaminants can still enter drinking water through aging infrastructure, naturally occurring minerals, industrial pollution, or household plumbing. Knowing where your water comes from is the first step toward protecting your health.

If You Have a Public Water System

- ☐ Read your community's annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR).
- ☐ Learn whether lead, PFAS, arsenic, nitrates, or other contaminants have been detected in your water system.
- ☐ Know whether your home has older plumbing that may contain lead.
- ☐ Run cold water before drinking or cooking if water has been sitting in pipes for several hours.
- ☐ Use only cold tap water for drinking, cooking, and preparing infant formula.
- ☐ Consider using a certified water filter if recommended for your area or household.
- ☐ Stay informed about boil-water advisories and other water notices.
- ☐ Contact your local water utility if you notice unusual taste, odor, or discoloration.

Protecting Water Resources

- ☐ Properly dispose of paints, chemicals, medications, and hazardous waste.
- ☐ Limit unnecessary use of lawn fertilizers and pesticides.
- ☐ Pick up pet waste to help protect local waterways.
- ☐ Support efforts to protect rivers, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands, and groundwater.
- ☐ Stay informed about drinking water issues affecting your community.

If You Have a Private Well

- ☐ Test your well water regularly for bacteria, nitrates, and other contaminants.
- ☐ Test for arsenic, PFAS, radon, or other contaminants if recommended in your region.
- ☐ Inspect your well and well cap periodically for damage.
- ☐ Keep hazardous chemicals, fuel, and fertilizers away from the wellhead.
- ☐ Maintain your septic system to help protect groundwater.
- ☐ Keep records of all water quality tests and well maintenance.
- ☐ After flooding or major repairs, have your well tested before drinking.
- ☐ Consider treatment systems only after identifying contaminants.

Water at Home

- ☐ Drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated.
- ☐ Replace water filters according to manufacturer recommendations.
- ☐ Clean reusable water bottles regularly.
- ☐ Reduce unnecessary use of single-use plastic water bottles.
- ☐ Learn where your drinking water comes from and how it is treated.

Safe Water Starts with Staying Informed

Whether your drinking water comes from a public water system or a private well, regular monitoring, informed decisions, and routine maintenance can help reduce environmental exposures and protect your family's health.

EHHI is dedicated to protecting human health from environmental harms through research, education, and the promotion of sound public policies.

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