



Clinton County Health Department

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“Working Together for a Healthier Community”

health.clintoncountyny.gov



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Media Release

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Maintain and Test Your Private Well

Plattsburgh, May 4, 2026. The Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) is reminding residents with private well systems to properly maintain their well and test their water for safety. Most of the central population hubs of Clinton County are served by public water systems that are regulated to ensure a safe and reliable supply of drinking water. However, about 30% of residents rely on private well systems. Private wells are not regulated, and it is the homeowner’s responsibility to test their water and maintain their well system.

“Private wells are the homeowner’s responsibility, but residents are not on their own. The County and Health Department are available to provide guidance and support to help ensure safe, reliable drinking water,” said Mark Henry, Chairman of the Clinton County Legislature

“Knowing what type of well you have and where on your property it is located is the first step to properly maintaining your well system,” explained Tim Simonette, Principal Public Health Sanitarian in the Environmental Health & Safety Division at CCHD. “There are three types of private drinking water wells: shallow dug or bored; driven; and drilled wells.”

Generally, drilled wells are considered the safest for home water supplies. They have a lower risk of contamination due to their depth and they include a continuous casing (a pipe placed in the well to keep soil and surface water out).

“Private well owners should also ensure possible sources of contamination are kept away from their well,” urged Mr. Simonette. “Things like unused chemicals or fertilizers, used motor or fuel oils, and animal waste are common contaminants that should be kept away from your well.”

Unless you test your private well water regularly, you may not know if your water is safe to drink. Test your drinking water:

- **Yearly for bacteria and nitrates.**
- **When you are expecting a baby.**
- **When your water changes in smell, taste, or color.** If this happens, drink bottled water and call CCHD at 518-565-4870 to find out which tests you should do.
- **If you add and/or replace parts of your water system,** like a new pump or new water softener. Test for bacteria after disinfecting and flushing.
- **If you put in a water treatment system to fix a problem.** Test the treated water each year to ensure treatment is working properly.



“Persons who have any physical mobility or other needs, call the telephone number above to arrange for accommodations”

“If you are looking to update or install a new well, there are some things to consider,” added Mr. Simonette. “First, you want to make sure your well is in a good location. If you have a septic system, the well must be at least 100 feet away from the leach field. You also don’t want the well in a low-lying area of the property that can be prone to flooding and you want it to be somewhere that is easily accessible for ease of maintenance. Lastly try to keep the well as far away from any other sources of contamination such as fuel oil tanks, animal yards, and surface water bodies such as rivers, lakes, etc. Hiring a professional is really the best way to ensure the quality of your well and safety of the water it supplies.”

Though CCHD doesn’t regulate private wells, they can provide residents with support and answer questions. Contact them at 518-565-4870.

Additional information can be found in CCHD’s *North Country Health Effect* available at <https://www.clintoncountyny.gov/sites/default/files/health/public-promotion/pdf/north-county-health-effect/water.pdf>

About the Clinton County Health Department:

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at health.clintoncountyny.gov or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), X (Twitter [@ClintonCountyHD]), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).

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