

Private Well Checks

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) recently unveiled a public awareness campaign to recommend that private well water users have their wells tested for at least two contaminants, every one to three years. The contaminants include total coliform bacteria and nitrate.

“It’s important for residents to understand that the Environmental Protection Agency sets regulations for treating and monitoring community water systems, but these regulations don’t apply to privately owned wells,” said KDHE Environment Director Leo Henning. “Residents are responsible for monitoring their own wells, so we want them to have the information they need to ensure their drinking water is safe from contamination.”

Approximately 7 percent of Kansans get their water from privately-owned wells.

The new webpage, <http://www.kdhe.ks.gov/wellwateraware/> includes an interactive map, with which residents can select their county and identify entities that will perform water well testing. The webpage also includes a tutorial video on sampling wells. An additional feature is access to the Kansas Environmental Interest Finder, which allows residents to search their neighborhoods for possible contamination, such as where their home sits in proximity to former dry-cleaning businesses, and will allow residents to identify local water well contractors licensed in Kansas.

“Protecting the health of all Kansans is a high priority,” said KDHE Environmental Health Officer and State Epidemiologist Farah Ahmed. “We want residents to have the tools they need to understand Protect and Improve the Health and Environment of all Kansans what they are consuming. While most water supplies are safe, there are some inherent risks that come with well water use, and drinking contaminated water can have long-term effects.”

Campaign awareness materials will be shared within rural communities and with the help of our broadcast and print news partners. The campaign will continue indefinitely.

Those who have questions or concerns about their well water are encouraged to call Northeast Kansas Environmental Services (NEKES) at 785-985-2778, or KDHE at 785- 296-5500. NEKES performs well checks and water screenings in the counties of Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson and Nemaha in northeast Kansas. Contact their office for more information.

