



888-395-1033
www.wellcarehotline.org

Spring
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Environmental Corner - Spring cleaning? Don't throw that down the drain!

This season is known for thorough cleaning around the home and yard. Use caution before you dump those old products left on the shelves down the drain, especially if you have a septic system. Avoid dumping old paints, harsh chemicals, medicine or any other products that will kill the bacteria in the septic tank. These products may also end up in your groundwater!

Protecting Your Septic System

- Have your septic tank cleaned by a professional every 2-3 years or more often for larger households.
- If your septic tank is over 15 years old, have it inspected for deterioration. If you have a water softener/conditioner on your water system, your septic tank should be checked every 5-10 years.
- Never use septic additives these can contaminate groundwater.
- Conserve water in and outside of your home by spreading out water-intensive activities like showers, dishwashing and laundry.
- Don't use your toilet or disposal as a garbage can. Dispose of all solids including: coffee grounds, food waste and grease, in the trash.
- Don't rinse paint brushes in the sink.
- Dispose of fertilizers/pesticides, paint, pharmaceuticals and personal care products properly. See our wellcare® information sheet on this topic at

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Partner News and Views:

The WaterSense *Current*
[Click Here](#)

The Groundwater Foundation, *The Aquifer*
[Click Here](#)

Dates to Remember:

March 6-12 is National Groundwater Awareness Week

March 14-20 is "Fix a Leak" Week

March 20-26 is National Poison Prevention Week

More information on these events can be found at
www.epa.gov/watersense

www.watersystemscouncil.org/infoSheets.php.

- Check the label, and use only drain cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners and laundry detergents that are safe for use in septic systems. Use baking soda and hot water to unclog drains or vinegar and water for cleaning instead of bleach.

Try using biodegradable or environmentally friendly pesticides and fertilizers. Or check with your local health department or waste management for hazardous waste acceptance sites to dispose of these unused products. Oil based paints are accepted at most, but water based paint can be thrown in the garbage once hardened. Many pharmacies offer take-back programs for pharmaceuticals. If there are no disposal options, you can alter the medications to make them undesirable or unusable. Try adding kitty litter, coffee grounds or spices like mustard or turmeric to liquid medications and water to pills. Pharmaceuticals for pets should be handled the same as for humans.

IT'S TIME TO USE THOSE LEAVES you composted in the fall for spring mulch! See our 2010 Fall Newsletter for details or go to www.watersystemscouncil.org/enews.php.

Mulch is used in gardens to suppress weeds, conserve soil moisture, reduce soil erosion, and modify the soil temperature (makes it cooler in the summer, reduces rapid decline and fluctuation in the winter). Yard waste compost makes ideal mulch for annual and perennial gardens. All you need to do is apply a 2-4 inch layer of compost around the base of the plant. Periodically throughout the summer, you may need to add more compost over the old layers to maintain the benefits of the mulch. The soil environment beneath the mulch is favorable for earthworms, which are valuable for aerating the soil. Organic matter is gradually added to the soil as the mulch decomposes.

wellcare® Tips - Well Inspection for Groundwater Protection

Ever think about the construction of your well and if it is in good condition? Protect your water supply through regular inspection and testing.

Well Inspection

- Inspect your wellhead several times a year. This is the most visible portion of your drinking water system and it is built over your well to protect its various parts. Check the condition of the well covering, casing, and well cap to make sure there are no cracks or other entry points for potential pollutants.
- Don't pile snow, leaves or other materials around the well where they can carry pollutants into the system.
- Keep pesticides, fertilizers, degreasers, fuels, and other potential pollutants at least 100 feet from your well. When siphoning

April 22 is Earth Day!
[Click Here](#)

FACT:

Pollution from agriculture, including cropland erosion, animal waste, and fertilizers, is the leading cause of polluted runoff.
Source: U.S. EPA

Quick Links

[Ask a Question](#)
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[Information Sheets](#)

HEY KIDS, DID YOU KNOW?

Around 2000 different types of plants are used by humans to make food.
Source:
Sciencekids.co.nz

water for these tasks, be careful to avoid back-flow into the well system.

- Take care when working or mowing around your well. It is easy to damage the wellhead with heavy equipment, which will jeopardize the sanitary protection of your well, permitting contaminants to enter the water supply.
- Have your well system, including the pump, storage tank, pipes, valves, and water flow inspected every 10 years by a qualified well driller or pump installer. ***If you have no inspection record and cannot determine the age of the well, have it inspected immediately by a water well professional.***
- When your well reaches the end of its serviceable life, usually more than 20 years, contact your water well professional to install a new system and properly close the old well.

Well Testing

- Test drinking water immediately if you have no recent test results or any record of previous tests.
- Test drinking water for bacteria every year in the spring. Also test annually for nitrates if you live in an agricultural area or have an on-site septic system.
- Test your drinking water right away if you notice any change in the taste, color, or odor of your water.
- Test your drinking water more than once a year in special situations: someone in the household is pregnant or nursing; there are unexplained illnesses in the family; your neighbors find a dangerous contaminant in their water; or there is a spill of chemicals or fuels into or near your well.
- Test your drinking water after any flooding in or near the well to determine if flood water carried bacteria or other contaminants into the well system.

To get your water tested contact your local or state health department for a list of state certified laboratories in your area or view your state's listings at,

<http://water.epa.gov/scitech/drinkingwater/labcert/statecertification.cfm>.

At the bottom of this newsletter, WSC testing partners - National Testing Laboratories, Ltd. and UL Drinkwell(tm) - have also provided codes for discount test kits.

When you receive your water test results, contact the **wellcare[®] Hotline** at **888-395-1033** for interpretation or if you have any questions.

Kids Place - Spring has sprung!

This is the time when the ground melts and plants start to grow. Try out these fun interactive online games featuring melting points and growing plants. Learn about the melting points of different substances by experimenting with different temperatures and learn how plants grow by using heat and water. See if you can make the plant grow to a healthy size. It's not as easy as it sounds! *(Don't forget to ask permission from your parents or an adult first!)*

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/gamesactivities/meltingpoints.html>

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/gamesactivities/plantsgrow.html>

Nature Trivia Quiz

See how many questions you can answer correctly and then check your answers below. *Hint: Some answers can be found in this newsletter!*



1. What is the name of the world's largest reef system?
2. Do male or female mosquitoes bite people?
3. True or False? Earth Day is held on June 18.
4. What state of the USA is the Grand Canyon located in?
5. True or False? The Dead Sea is 8.6 time more salty than the ocean.
6. What are the 3 R's of recycling?
7. True or False? The horn of a rhinoceros is made from bone.
8. What famous islands west of the Ecuador were extensively studied by Charles Darwin?
9. Ayers Rock in Australia is also known as what?
10. True or False? Burning or logging naturally occurring forests is known as deforestation.

Answers
 1. Great Barrier Reef
 2. Female
 3. False (April 22)
 4. Arizona
 5. True

6. Reduce Reuse Recycle
 7. False (Kenan)
 8. Kalapagos Islands
 9. Uturn
 10. True

**Save
10%**

ON WATER TEST KITS

Use coupon code: WSC, when purchasing WaterCheck or WaterCheck PO test kits from National Testing Laboratories, Ltd.

To order contact NTL at 800-458-3330 or www.watercheck.com.

Use promo code: WSC, when purchasing Drinkwell test kits from UL Drinkwell.

To order visit, www.uldrinkwell.com.