

# What you can do to protect well water

*Groundwater Management Area (GWMA):*

*The purpose of the GWMA is to reduce nitrate contamination concentrations in groundwater below state drinking water standards*

## Steps to assure you have safe drinking water

### *Things to consider if you are a private household well owner:*

**Have your water tested** – at least once a year for nitrates and coliform bacteria. High nitrates can harm pregnant women, newborn babies and the elderly, and high bacteria counts can cause illnesses. More information on Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area at <http://www.yakimacounty.us/1617/Groundwater-Management-Area>. A list of certified labs and information on water testing are available online at <http://www.yakimacounty.us/344/Drinking-Water-Testing>.

**Locate all wells** on your property, both active and inactive. Make sure to cap your wells securely with manufactured or welded caps to prevent pollution and objects from entering your well.

**Have your septic pumped** - Neglecting septic system maintenance can result in backed-up sewage, expensive repairs and surface seepage that can pollute your well. A system for a four-person household should be pumped every three years.

**Use less water** – Not only does your septic system function better with less water, pumping more water from your well can pull nearby pollution toward your home.

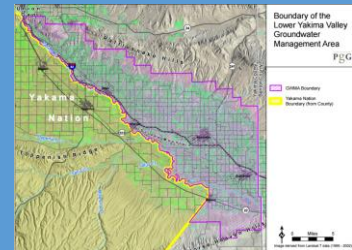
**Manage fertilizers and chemicals** – Excess fertilizer moves easily through the soil and contributes to high nitrate levels. Spilled chemicals can reach your well water. Recycle household and hazardous wastes at the County collection facility. Never dump these items on your property or pour them down the drain.

**Shield animal waste** – Animal yards and piles of composting manure are sources for nitrates and bacteria. Take steps to prevent runoff and soil seepage.

**Install backflow preventers** – on all your outdoor faucets. Sometimes water can siphon backwards through a hose and down your well. Be very careful when you attach a chemical sprayer to your hose.

Do your part to keep groundwater safe and clean.

### GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA



The purpose of the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area is to reduce nitrate contamination where concentrations do not meet drinking water standards.

### GWAC Working Groups

- Data Collection, Characterization, Monitoring
- Education and Public Outreach
- Funding
- Irrigated Agriculture
- Livestock/CAFO
- Regulatory Framework
- Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Municipal

To get involved, call  
(509) 574-2300

More information at:  
[www.yakimacounty.us](http://www.yakimacounty.us)