

# Treating Your Well Water for Nitrate

If your well water contains nitrate levels greater than 10mg/L, use bottled water for drinking, preparing infant formula, and washing or cooking food.

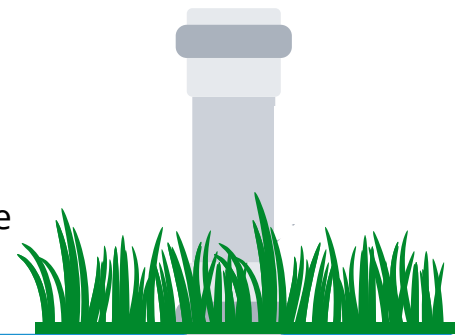
**Do not boil water! This will increase the amount of nitrate in the water.**

## Identify Potential Sources of Contamination

If possible, identify any sources around the home that could be contributing to the elevated nitrate levels in your well water. Some potential sources include:

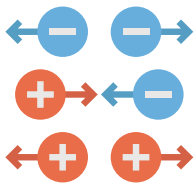
- Excessive use of nitrogen-based fertilizers
- High concentrations of animal manure too near the well
- Septic systems too near the well

Nitrate is more likely to enter wells that are damaged. If you notice any damages to your well, contact a licensed well contractor.

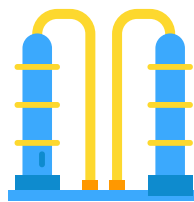


## Install a Water Treatment System

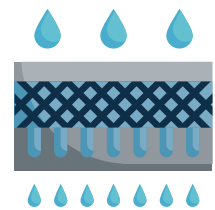
There are three types of water treatment systems that can be installed to reduce or remove nitrate from water. However, these treatment systems may be expensive to install and require careful maintenance and monitoring.



Ion Exchange



Distillation



Reverse Osmosis

**Before you install a water treatment system, make sure to consider the following:**

- You may choose to install a treatment system that treats water at a single tap or all of the water in the home. **Remember, nitrate is only a concern for ingestion.**
- **Water treatment systems need to be properly maintained to remain effective over time.** Maintenance can include changing filters, disinfecting the unit, backwashing, or cleaning out mineral build-up.

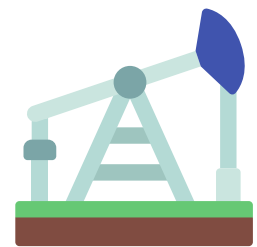


- **Consider all of the costs.** Water treatments systems are not only expensive to install but also include maintenance fees as well as energy costs associated with their use.
- There are several water treatment system manufacturers. **Choose a system that is certified for nitrate removal by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) or Water Quality Association (WQA).**
- **Contact a licensed water treatment specialist to learn more about the different types of systems, maintenance requirements, and costs.**



## Dig a New or Deeper Well

It is possible to dig a new well in a different location or a deeper well in a different aquifer (underground layer of water). However, there is no guarantee that digging a new or deeper well will improve the quality of the water. **If you dig a new or deeper well, check local well drilling requirements and talk to a certified well driller.**



## Test Your Well Water

**You should continue to test your well for nitrate even if you get your well repaired, install a water treatment system, or dig a new or deeper well.** The Yakima Health District recommends you test your water once a year and quarterly if it contains nitrate levels greater than 5mg/L.



## Resources

### Yakima Health District

**Help Desk:** 509-575-4040

[www.YakimaHealthDistrict.org/Nitrate](http://www.YakimaHealthDistrict.org/Nitrate)

### Water Treatment Systems

[www.NFS.org](http://www.NFS.org)

[www.WQA.org](http://www.WQA.org)



### Well Drilling Requirements

**Help Desk:** 509-575-2597

[www.ecology.wa.gov](http://www.ecology.wa.gov)

### Financial Resources

[www.PrivateWellClass.org/funding](http://www.PrivateWellClass.org/funding)

[www.RCAC.org](http://www.RCAC.org)