

# Nitrates FAQs



## Where do nitrates come from?

- Fertilizer, animal waste (feedlots), human sewage (septic systems)

## Who is more likely to have contaminated drink water?

- Landowners with shallow wells, damaged wells, wells not properly installed, or a nitrate source that is located too close to a well

## What are the health risks associated with nitrates?

- Highest risk is for infants (blue baby syndrome)
- Pregnant women and individuals with blood disorders also at risk
- Some research has shown that nitrates cause cancer, but has not been proven

## What is a safe level of nitrates in your drinking water?

- 10mg/L is the Federal Drinking Water Standard which is mandatory for public water systems
- 10mg/L is also recommended for private wells
- Nitrate levels in water that exceed the 10mg/L would be considered unsafe for drinking water standards

## How often should you test your water?

- Test for nitrates every year
- Test more frequently if nitrates have been detected in previous samples

## Is there a way to get rid of nitrates in my drinking water?

- Nitrates cannot be boiled out of your water
- If you have found the source of your nitrates, you may be able to remove the source that is contaminating your water
  - Fertilizers, animal wastes, sewage systems
- If your well is damaged/broken, a well contractor may be able to fix it
- Lastly, you may have to abandon your well and have a well contractor drill a new one
  - If you are unable to identify or move the nitrate source