

Phosphorus FAQs



Where does phosphorus come from?

- Fertilizer, animal waste, human sewage (septic systems), laundry detergents, soaps, rocks, vegetation

Who is more likely to have contaminated drink water?

- Landowners with shallow groundwater, damaged wells, wells not properly installed, sandy soils, low organic matter, or a phosphorus source that is located too close to a well

What are the health risks associated with phosphorus?

- High concentrations of phosphorus can cause digestive problems
- High concentrations of phosphorous can produce algae blooms on surface waters, which in return can create blue green algae
 - Blue green algae can be toxic to humans (cause vomiting, diarrhea, rash, eye irritation, cough, sore throat, and headache) and is deadly to pets

What is a safe level of phosphorus in your drinking water?

- There are no Federal Drinking Water Standard for phosphorus
- Phosphorus concentrations that are greater than 0.1mg/L indicates problems with water quality due to eutrophication (greening of lakes due to algae blooms)

How often should you test your well?

- Test for phosphorus if concerned you may have high concentrations in your water
- Test more frequently if phosphorus has been detected in previous samples

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

- If you have found the source of your phosphorus, you may be able to remove that source
 - 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 phosphorus source