

Well Water Health & Safety

Contaminants can easily enter unprotected wells

Rain, irrigation and flood water can carry bacteria, viruses and metals down the sides of well casings or openings in the well head.

If this happens, there is little chance for these contaminants to break down, die off or be filtered out by surrounding soil or groundcover.

- Small animals in search of water can fall down large wells and drown. When their carcasses rot, the water is contaminated with bacteria and viruses.
- Some people use old wells to dispose of rubbish or offal.
- Accidental contamination of well water can occur when people back-siphon contaminants or drop material between pump hoses and well casings.
- Allowing artesian wells to free flow increases the risk of contamination by lowering water pressures - and it wastes valuable water!
- Contaminants in a well can travel with groundwater and be drawn up through other wells. **All wells need to be protected, whether they are in use or not.**



Avoid groundwater contamination

Reduce the risk of contamination by securing your well-head. It will save you worry and money over the long term.

- Seal the area between the well casing and surrounding ground with concrete and/or bentonite (see photo above).
- Seal any free-flowing wells.
- Install a back-flow preventer in your pumping system if you have a hose near a potential contamination source. Please don't leave a water hose in a stock trough, fish pond or mixing container.
- Take care with maintenance activities - Keep grease or petrol products away from pumps or nearby equipment so it can't be washed into the well casing.
- Keep the area near your well clear of rubbish and offal.
- Don't spray chemicals near your well-head, and don't store compost, fertiliser, or chemicals nearby.
- Secure your well so animals cannot fall in. Keep stock away from the immediate area so they don't defecate near the well.
- Never dump waste into your well, even if it's no longer used, as you risk contaminating neighbouring wells.
- Have your water tested annually whether you own or lease the land - don't assume your water is as clean as it looks. See the list of labs on right.
- Regularly check well security. Things can change after storms and earthquakes.

Would you hold a cup of tea with the same hand that had just mucked out a compost bin?

If you are drinking from an unprotected groundwater source, the health effects could be the same.

Protect your well-head

Groundwater contamination affects human and animal health and can impact crops and waterways.

Most people think contaminants move down through the soil and across to an aquifer, where they may get pumped out through a well. But the well itself can be an entry point for nasties!

Bore Inspection

All well owners should get their bores inspected and serviced by a suitably qualified and experienced person.

An approved list of service providers is available on the Council's website.

Labs which can analyse your water:

- **Hill Laboratories**
Hamilton, 0508 44 555 22
- **Water Testing Hawke's Bay**
Hastings, 06 870 6449

For more information

hbrc.govt.nz
search #boresecurity
or contact

Compliance Team 0800 108 838

