



FACT SHEET

DOUGLAS TWP & MIESVILLE PRIVATE WELL SAMPLING IN 2020

Physical Development Division
Environmental Resources Dept.
Groundwater Protection Unit

WHY WERE WELLS TESTED?

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the drinking water quality in private wells located in the City of Miesville and Douglas Township in Dakota County, Minnesota. Water samples were tested for the presence of geologically sourced (naturally occurring) manganese and arsenic, as well as human-caused chloride and nitrate. Previous sampling of private wells in Douglas Township were found to exceed the drinking water guideline for nitrate and for manganese in Miesville.

STUDY APPROACH

The County mailed sample bottles to 302 likely private well owners in Miesville and Douglas Township; 35% (105 of 302) participated. Residents were asked to collect a water sample from both an outside untreated spigot and an inside primary drinking water tap. All outside samples were tested for manganese, arsenic, nitrate, and chloride. If the outside sample result exceeded 3.0 milligrams per liter (mg/L) for nitrate, 0.05 micrograms per liter (µg/L) for arsenic, or 0.090 mg/L for manganese, then the sample collected from the inside tap was tested for that chemical. In addition, all inside tap samples were analyzed for lead. A hardness test strip was provided as part of the sampling kit for well owners to test and report when submitting samples. In addition, the participants completed a survey indicating all water treatment methods used on the water sample collected from the inside tap.

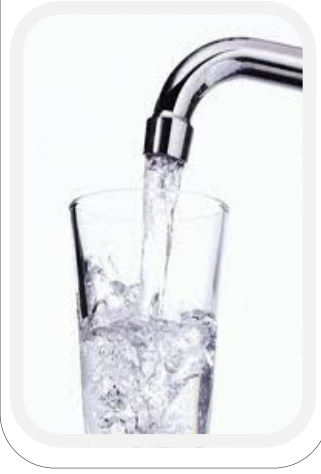


TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF WATER TEST RESULTS

	Chemical (units)	# of well samples	Detections # of samples (%)	Drinking Water Guideline (DWG)	Samples above DWG # of samples (%)	Mean (Average)	Maximum
Outside Sample (Untreated)	Arsenic (µg/L)	105	19 (18%)	10 µg/L No amount is safe	0 (0%)	0.74	1.94
	Chloride (mg/L)	105	64 (61%)	250 mg/L*	1 (1%)	22.6	278.0
	Manganese (mg/L)	105	54 (51%)	0.300 mg/L	1 (1%)	0.020	0.370
	Nitrate (mg/L)	105	63 (60%)	10 mg/L	34 (32%)	6.94	31.80
	Hardness (mg/L)	105	105	None	NA	356	425
Inside Sample (May be treated or untreated)	Arsenic (µg/L)	18	6 (33%)	10 µg/L No amount is safe	0 (0%)	0.12	1.48
	Lead (µg/L)	105	12 (11%)	15 µg/L No amount is safe	0 (0%)	0.7	11.8
	Manganese (mg/L)	1	1 (100%)	0.300 mg/L	1 (100%)	0.382	0.382
	Nitrate (mg/L)	49	49 (100%)	10 mg/L	20 (41%)	4.93	29.50
	Hardness (mg/L)	105	105	None	NA	201	425

mg/L - milligrams of chemical per liter of water equivalent to parts per million (ppm)

µg/L - micrograms of chemical per liter of water equivalent to parts per billion (ppb)

< - Less than (result is below the level that the laboratory can report)

NA - not applicable

* 250 mg/L is not a health standard but indicates when the water may start to taste salty

Hardness—Water softeners are effective at reducing manganese, copper and radium levels. Testing for radium is expensive. Radium is present in private wells in Dakota County, No amount of radium is safe. Consider installing a high efficiency water softener that will use less salt and is certified to reduce radium to treat the water to your primary drinking water tap.

CHEMICAL CONTAMINANT INFORMATION & SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

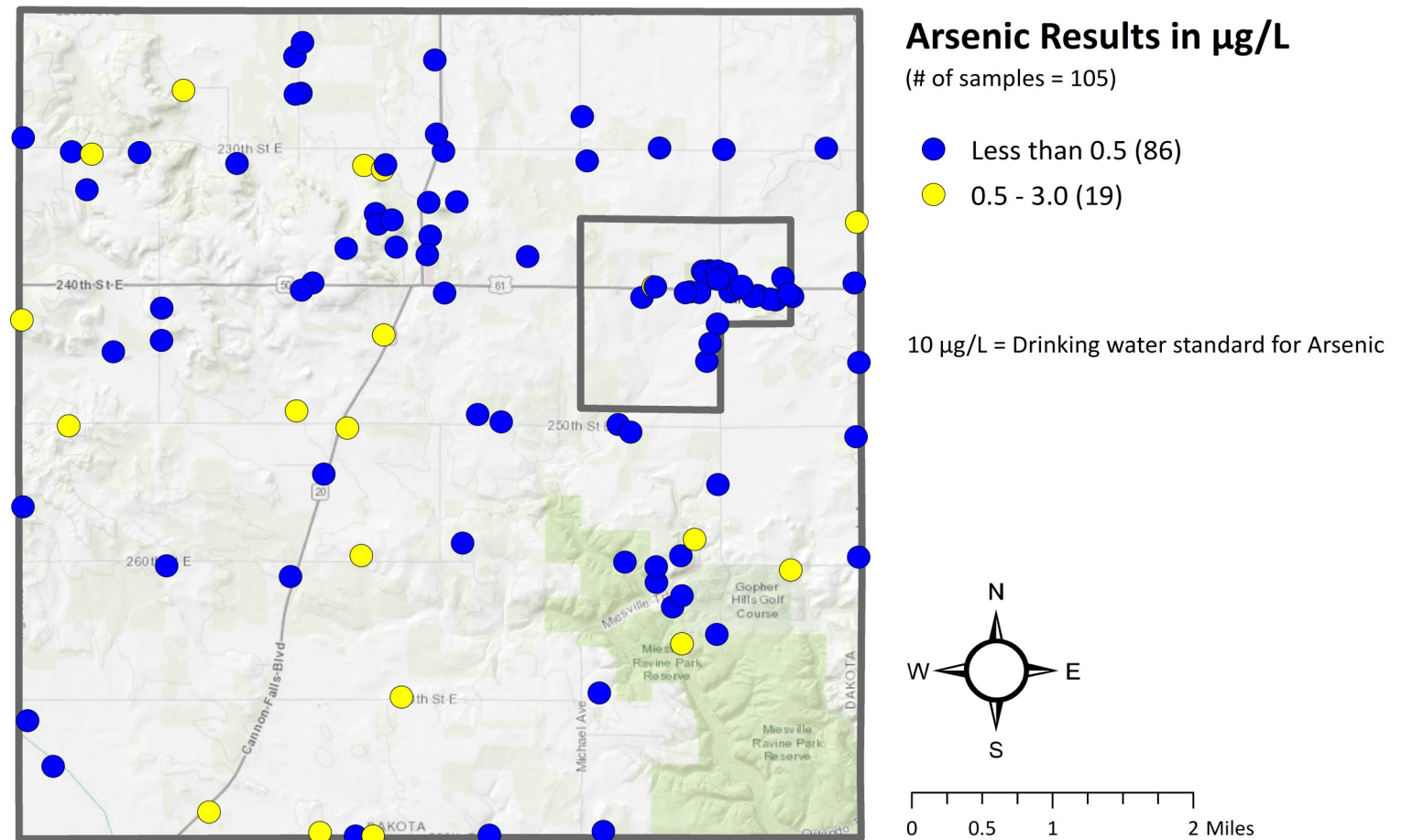
Arsenic: occurs naturally in rocks and soil and dissolves into groundwater. Arsenic in drinking water is linked to increased risk of cancers of the bladder, lungs, liver, and other organs. High levels of arsenic in drinking water can also contribute to cardiovascular and respiratory disease, reduced intelligence in children, and skin problems, such as lesions, discoloration, and the development of corns. The drinking water guideline for arsenic is 10 µg/L, but the US Environmental Protection Agency goal for arsenic in drinking water is 0 µg/L since prolonged exposure to any level of arsenic can increase risks of cancer.

Results and Findings:

- Arsenic was found in 18% (19 of 105 wells) of the outside samples and in 33% (6 of 18 wells) of the inside samples. None of the sampled wells exceeded the drinking water guideline of 10 µg/L.
- Effectiveness of water treatment by Reverse Osmosis (RO) systems was variable ranging from 49% to 63% arsenic reduction. Some existing RO systems can have an additional filter installed to reduce arsenic.
- Arsenic is statistically correlated with manganese, which means when one is present the other is likely to be present.
- Arsenic concentrations are higher in deep wells and decrease with decreasing well depth. Statistical analysis was performed on the 63 of 105 wells that have a well construction record on file at the County or the MN Geological Survey.

Arsenic exists in different forms and may require specialized treatment systems to remove completely. No amount of arsenic is safe.

FIGURE 1. ARSENIC RESULT IN UNTREATED WATER FROM OUTSIDE SPIGOT



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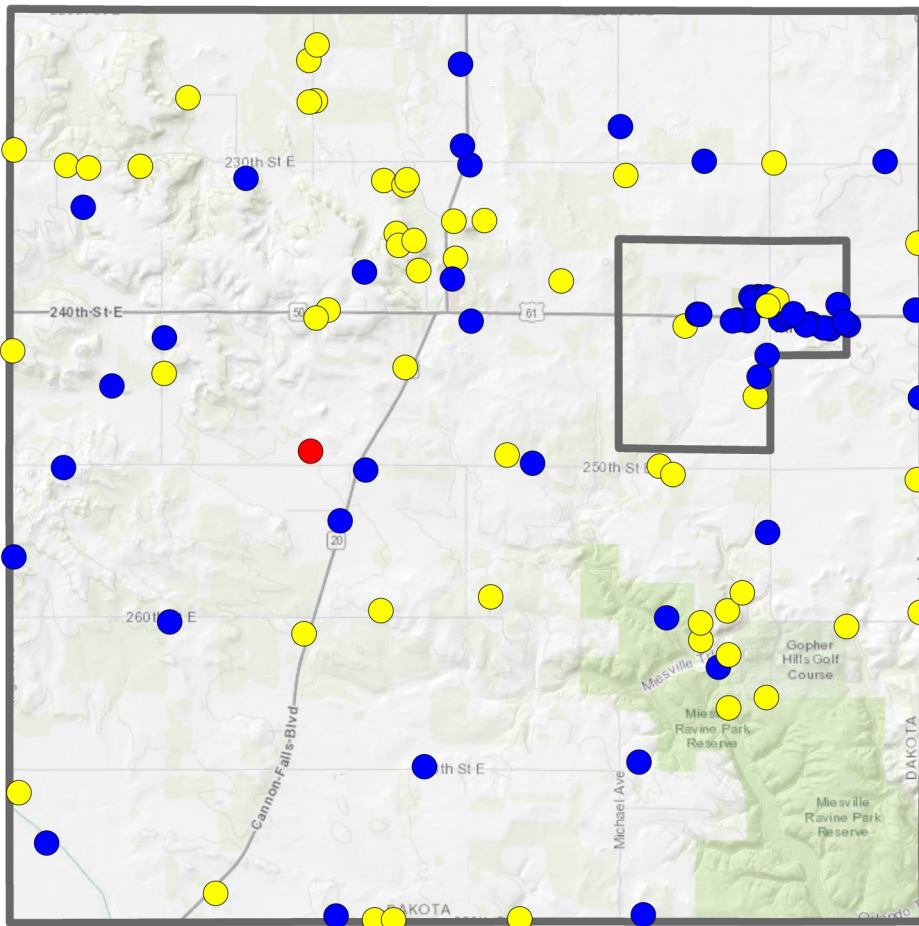


Manganese: occurs naturally in rocks and soil and dissolves into groundwater. Our bodies need a small amount of manganese to maintain health, and we get enough manganese from the foods we eat. However, research indicates that children and adults who drink water with high levels of manganese for a long time may develop problems with memory, attention, and motor skills. Infants are more vulnerable to the effects of manganese. For infants who drink well water or formula made with well water, manganese should not exceed 0.100 mg/L. For everyone else, the level of manganese should not exceed 0.300 mg/L. Non-health related problems (metallic taste and staining plumbing fixtures) may occur above 0.050 mg/L.

Results and Findings:

- Manganese was detected in one well above the drinking water guideline of 0.300 mg/L in both the inside and outside water sample.
- Manganese is statistically correlated with arsenic, which means when one is present the other is likely to be present.
- Manganese concentrations are higher in deeper wells and decrease with decreasing well depth. Statistical analysis was performed on the 63 of 105 wells that have a well construction record on file at the County or the MN Geological Survey.

FIGURE 2. MANGANESE RESULT IN UNTREATED WATER FROM OUTSIDE SPIGOT



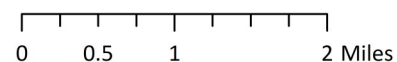
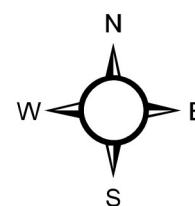
Manganese Results in mg/L

(# of samples = 105)

- Less than 0.005 (51)
- 0.005 - 0.099 (53)
- 0.100 - 0.299 (0)
- Greater than 0.300 (1)

(0.100 mg/L) Recommended limit for infants younger than one year old who consume tap water or formula made with tap water

(0.300 mg/L) or higher, the recommended limit for children older than one year and adults

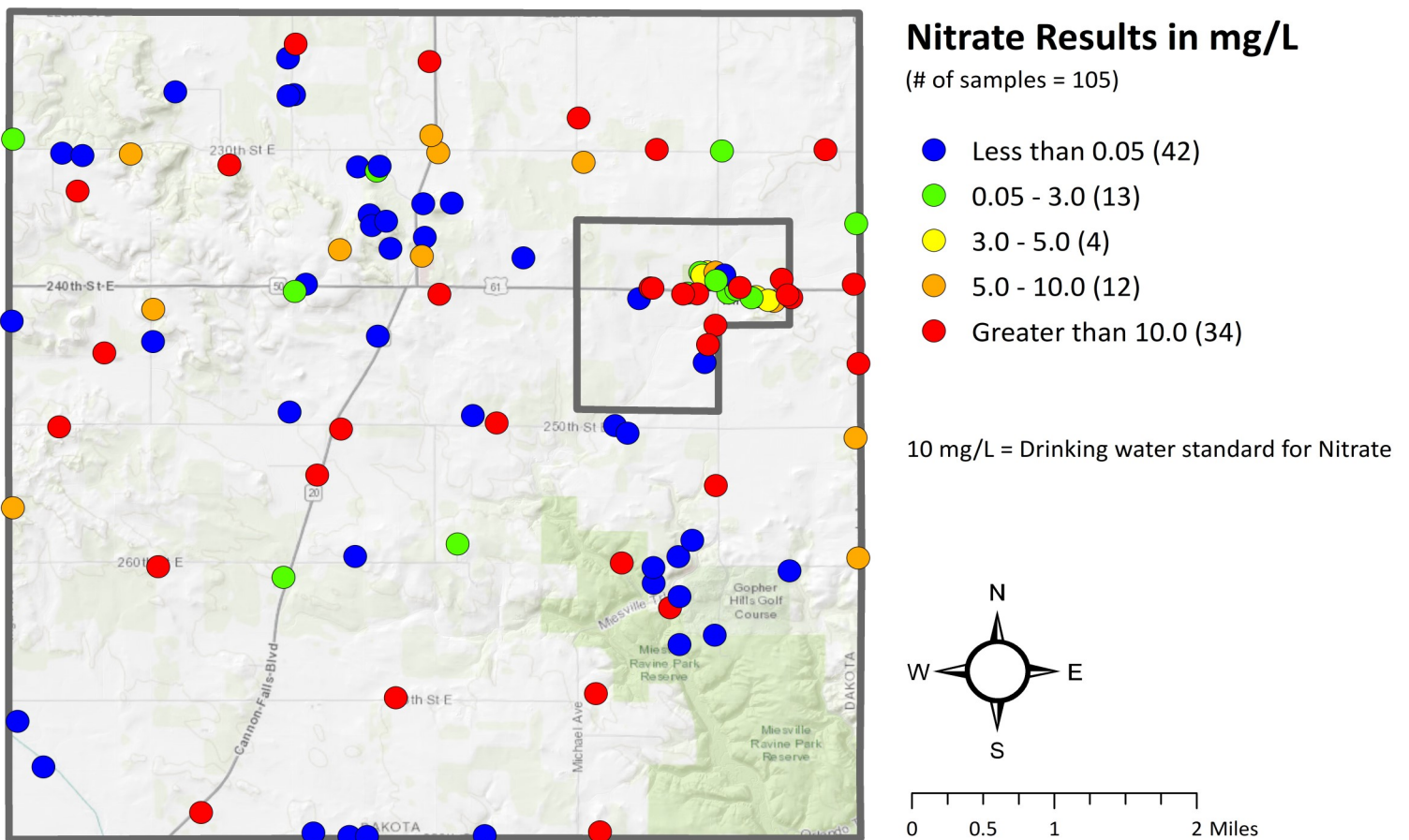


Nitrate: occurs naturally at very low levels. Nitrate in groundwater is usually associated with human activities including row crop agriculture, septic systems, and animal feedlots. In Dakota County, the major source is fertilizer used on agricultural crops, which leaches to the drinking water aquifers. A nitrate level above 10 mg/L in drinking water can be harmful to infants under six months old. Infants that consume water or formula mixed with water that is high in nitrate may develop “blue baby syndrome” (methemoglobinemia), a life-threatening condition. Adults may be susceptible to methemoglobinemia if they have certain health conditions. Always test for nitrate before giving well water to an infant. There is a significant relationship between the detection and levels of nitrate and herbicides. **The presence of nitrate is a strong indication that herbicides or herbicide breakdown products are also present.** Importantly, both nitrate and herbicides can be reduced by the use of a water treatment device such as reverse osmosis system (RO). Carbon alone can reduce herbicide concentrations.

Results and Findings:

- Nitrate was detected in 60% (63 of 105 wells) of the outside samples; 32% (34 of 105 wells) exceed the drinking water guideline of 10 mg/L.
- Nitrate exceeded the drinking water guideline in 41% (20 of 49 wells) in inside drinking water tap samples.
- Effectiveness of water treatment by Reverse Osmosis (RO) systems was variable ranging from 39% to 95% nitrate reduction.
- Nitrate is statistically correlated with chloride, which means when one occurs the other is likely to occur. Both are applied to the ground surface by human activities and impact our drinking water aquifers.
- Nitrate concentrations are higher in shallower wells and decrease with increasing well depth. Statistical analysis was performed on the 63 of 105 wells that have a well construction record on file at the County.

FIGURE 3. NITRATE RESULT IN UNTREATED WATER FROM OUTSIDE SPIGOT



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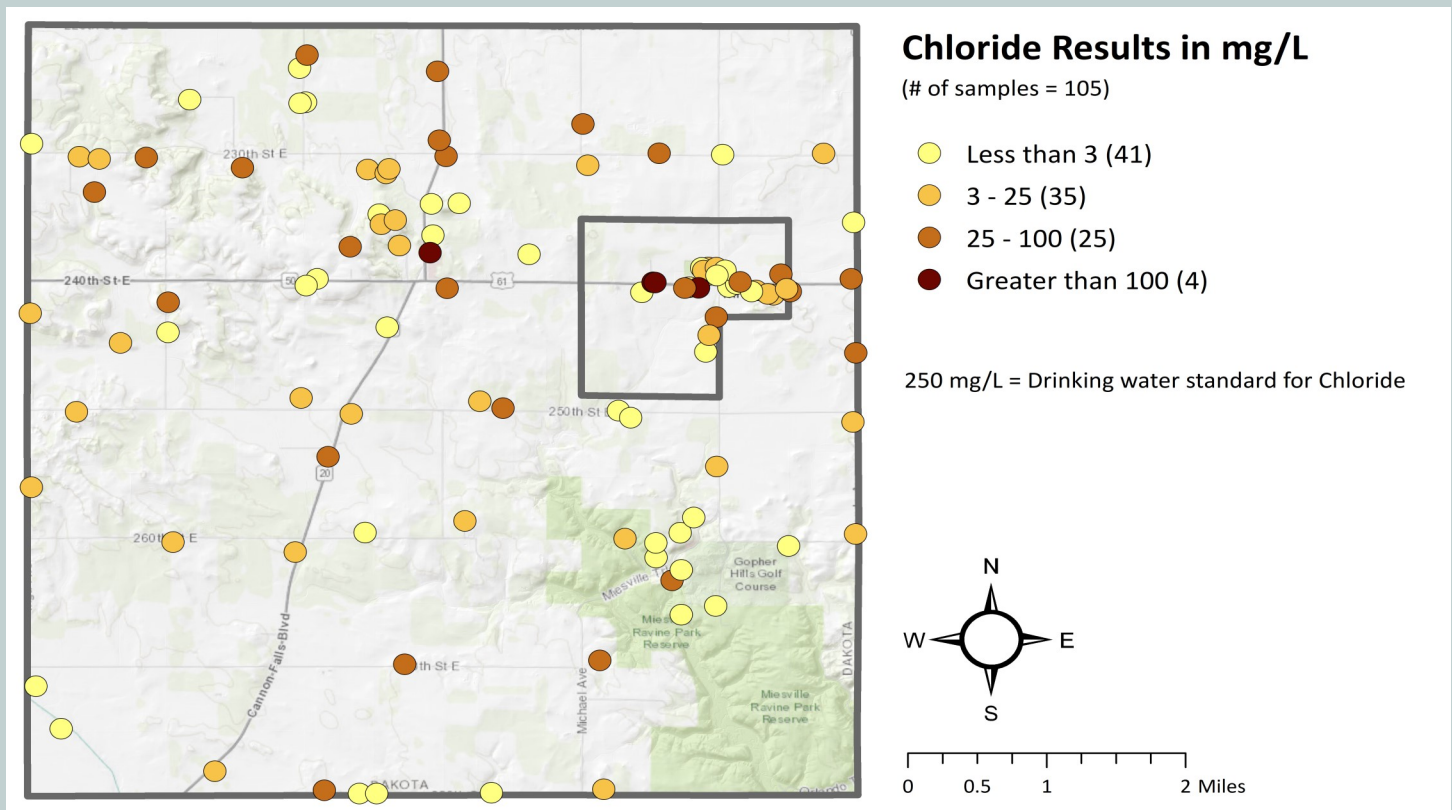


Chloride: occurs naturally in the rocks and soil across Dakota County at very low levels. High levels of chloride in groundwater indicate contamination from the application of road salt, potash fertilizer, water softener brine discharge into septic systems, or deicing salt applied to sidewalks and parking lots. Elevated chloride can potentially leach metals, like lead, from plumbing into the drinking water. There is no health-based guideline for chloride, but the USEPA recommends levels no higher than 250 mg/L to avoid undesirable tastes (saltiness). Chloride detected in well water indicates that the well is vulnerable to surface contamination.

Results:

- Chloride was found in 61% (64 of 105 wells) of the outside samples, the highest result was 278 mg/L. Chloride levels are higher in shallow wells and decrease with increasing well depth. Statistical analysis was performed on the 63 of 105 wells that have a well construction record on file at the County or the MN Geological Survey.
- Nitrate is statistically correlated with chloride, which means when one occurs the other is likely to occur. Both are applied to the ground surface by human activities and impact our drinking water aquifers.

FIGURE 4. CHLORIDE RESULT IN UNTREATED WATER FROM OUTSIDE SPIGOT



Lead: rarely occurs naturally in groundwater. Lead can leach into drinking water from lead pipes; lead solder on copper pipes; and brass faucets, fittings and valves (including those advertised as lead-free). Brass fixtures, including fixtures that don't look like brass, such as chrome plate brass products, can contribute lead to drinking water. The USEPA federal drinking water guideline for lead is 15 µg/L, however, there is no safe level of lead. Lead exposure usually has no obvious health symptoms and can go unrecognized. Health concerns include impaired physical and mental development, hearing problems, and damage to the brain, kidneys, red blood cells, and nervous system. Pregnant women, infants, and children under six years of age are at the highest risk. The federal "Reduction in Lead in Drinking Water Act" (2014) reduced the amount of lead allowed in water systems and plumbing products by changing the definition of "lead free" from 8% lead content to not more than 0.25% lead in drinking water plumbing components.

Results:

- All samples collected from the inside primary drinking water tap were tested for lead. Lead was detected in 11% (12 of 105) of the samples. None of the samples exceeded 15 µg/L, the drinking water guideline for lead; however, no amount of lead is safe to drink.
- When purchasing a water treatment device look for one that is certified to reduce lead.



Physical Development Division
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The water testing
was funded by
Dakota County.

If your water has elevated levels...

⇒⇒ **Prepare infant formula with bottled water.**

⇒⇒ **Do not boil your drinking water.** Boiling water may concentrate contaminants. However, it may be effective at killing bacteria.

⇒⇒ **Remove contamination sources.** If possible, identify and remove sources of contamination near the well. Fertilizers, animal wastes, and sewage systems should be located far from the well and managed to avoid contamination. The top of the well should be at least 12 inches above the surrounding dirt or landscaping.

⇒⇒ **Install a water treatment system.** We recommend hiring a state licensed water conditioning contractor to install water treatment systems. Remember, treatment systems require annual maintenance for effective operation. No single treatment process can

remove all substances in water. If you decide to install a home water treatment unit, the unit (or units) you choose should be certified by NSF, UL, or WQA, and specifically labeled to reduce or remove the contaminant you are concerned about. (However, devices are not certified for manganese removal at this time.) If there are several substances you want removed from your water, you may need to combine several treatment processes.

⇒⇒ **Continue sampling and maintain your system.** You should continue to test your drinking water after you install a treatment unit because there is often no other way to know if a treatment system is working properly. All home water treatment units require regular maintenance to work properly.

⇒⇒ **Coliform Bacteria Test.** A coliform bacteria test is recommended annually for private wells. Coliform bacteria was not tested for as part of this study. Consider testing; see directions on how to get a test kit, below.

We can help.

⇒⇒ Dakota County may have a copy of the original well record for your well on file if the well was drilled since 1975. The well record can tell you the aquifer your well is tapping and assist a well contractor who may do future work on your well. To request your well record go to:
www.dakotacounty.us
Search *Well Information*

⇒⇒ If you choose to install a new well and will no longer be using your existing well, the old well will need to be sealed by a licensed well contractor. Dakota County may have grant funds available (usually 50% of the cost to seal the well). The application is located at:
www.dakotacounty.us
Search *Well Sealing Grant*

Further Testing

Request water sample bottles from Dakota County by calling (952) 891-7000 or ordering from www.dakotacounty.us Search: *Water Test.*



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Coliform Bacteria (Every year)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nitrate (Every other year)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Arsenic (At least once)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lead (At least once)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manganese (At least once)

Dakota County Groundwater Study

Learn more about the County's drinking water aquifers and water quality like nitrate, arsenic, manganese, chloride, pesticides and industrial chemicals including the 3M chemicals, go to:

www.dakotacounty.us

search

Ambient Study