

If your family gets drinking water from a private well, how do you know the water is safe to drink? Unlike public drinking water systems, private wells are not regularly checked for contamination before the water is sent to the tap. Households that use private wells must take special precautions to ensure the safety of their drinking water supplies. You cannot see, taste or smell many common well water contaminants, so regular testing is very important.

Much like annual preventative health screenings, an annual well test for bacteria and

nitrates is an important part of maintaining good health. This practice ensures early detection of contamination so that measures can be taken to correct it. Those residents on public water are encouraged to test their water for lead as the primary source of lead contamination is indoor plumbing. This spring, the Bridgewater Township Environmental Commission will partner with nonprofit clean water advocate Raritan Headwaters to offer water testing to residents at a discounted rate.

Residents can purchase water sample collection kits at the **Bridgewater Municipal Complex** on **March 30 from 9 am to noon**. Water samples must be dropped off at the Municipal Complex on Monday, April 1st between 7:00am and 9:30am. Test results will be available 2-3 weeks later.

Raritan Headwaters (RHA) is a non-profit watershed conservation organization working to protect and preserve the public's access to safe, clean water that is swimmable, fishable and most importantly, drinkable. The Community Well Testing program was established in 1974, allowing RHA to monitor the health of our region's groundwater supply for over four decades. Well water pollutants include coliform bacteria, nitrate, arsenic, iron, uranium, radon and volatile organic compounds. Water may also become contaminated with lead and copper as it travels through older pipes in the home.

A "basic kit" for coliform bacteria and nitrate is available for \$60. Lead testing is just \$25. Information on other available tests can be found at <u>www.testmywell.org</u>. Testing is performed by a private state certified laboratory and results are confidential.

Your well is an important investment that is best protected by regular check-ups to ensure a reliable and safe source of drinking water for you and your family. For those who aren't able to take advantage of the Township's Community Well Test event on March 30<sup>th</sup> may contact Mara Tippett, Raritan Headwaters' Well Test Manager, to arrange to pick up a test kit in Bedminster or Flemington at another time. She can be contacted at 908-234-1852, ext. 401 or <u>welltesting@raritanheadwaters.org</u>.

For more information about Raritan Headwaters and its programs and preserves, go to <u>www.raritanheadwaters.org</u>.

