

What else should I test for?

Other things can be found in your well water. It is your job to make sure your well water is safe:

- Everyone with a drilled bedrock well in Maine should test their well water for arsenic and radon
- Test for radium only if your uranium treatment system will not also remove radium.

Call us toll free (866-292-3474) if you have questions.

To get your water tested:

Look in the Yellow Pages under "Laboratories—Testing" or contact:

Maine State Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory
221 State Street
Statehouse Sta. #12
Augusta, ME 04333-0012
Tel: 207-287-2727

Website:

<http://www.state.me.us/dhs/etl/>

To learn more:

To learn more about how uranium can harm you, call:

Andrew E. Smith, SM, ScD
Environmental Toxicology Program
Bureau of Health/DHS
11 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
Toll Free: 866-292-3474
Email: andy.e.smith@state.me.us

Website:

<http://www.state.me.us/dhs/etp/>

To learn more about treating your well, call:

David Braley, Geologist
Drinking Water Program
Bureau of Health/DHS
11 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
Tel: 207-287-3194
Email: david.braley@state.me.us

Website

<http://www.state.me.us/dhs/eng/water/Private%20Wells%20Home.htm>

Maine Bureau of Health



Kevin W. Concannon, Commissioner
February 20, 2003

Uranium in my Well Water: Now What do I do?

Health Information for
Private Well Users



If your water is high in uranium:

First

- Switch to bottled water for drinking and making beverages.

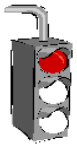
Then

- Other things may be in your water. Test for Arsenic and Radon as well.
- Get help in choosing the best water treatment system. Or, keep using bottled water.
- If you install a system, test again to make sure it works.

See inside for more ways to protect you and your family

How Much is too Much?

Your test result tells you how much uranium is in your water. The amount is measured in micrograms per liter (or ug/l). Get your test results and compare your numbers to these below:



Above 30 micrograms per liter you need to act! Switch to bottled water right away. Check out treatment systems.



From 20 to 30 micrograms per liter, use less tap water for drinking and beverages.



Below 20 micrograms per liter, there is no need to act.

What Should I Do?

Drink bottled water if your test results are high. If you often cook foods that soak up or use water like noodles, rice, and soup, use bottled water. You can either keep

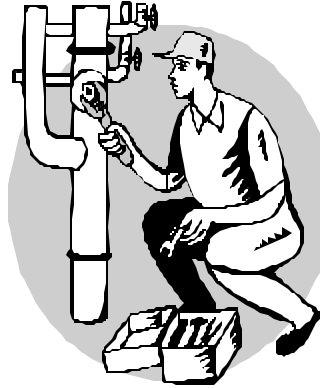
using bottled water, or choose a treatment system to remove the uranium.



Switching to bottled water is a fast and easy way to reduce the amount of uranium you drink.

How to fix your water

Shop around. Talk to a few water treatment companies to choose a uranium removal system. How to treat depends on what else is in your water and how much water you need to treat. Some choices include:



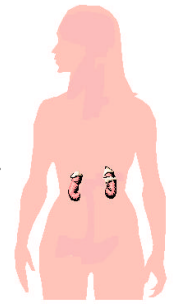
Choice of a treatment system can be tricky. Talk to an expert.

- Reverse osmosis
- Ion Exchange
- Activated alumina

Treatment companies should explain the pros and cons of each system for your well water. Once you have installed a system, test it right away and then each year to make sure it's working right. And, follow all directions for the care of your system.

The Dangers of Uranium

Drinking water high in uranium can harm your kidneys. Kidneys are two small organs in your lower back. They filter your blood and make urine. Uranium can also cause cancer. Which harm, and its chance of happening, depends on:



Uranium can harm your kidneys. Your kidneys clean your blood.

- How much uranium is in your water
- How much tap water you drink
- How long you have been drinking the water.

At levels found in water in Maine, we think first about the chance of kidney damage. Talk to your doctor if you are worried about harm from drinking water high in uranium. Some tests can check for kidney damage.

Pat's well water tested high:

"I was shocked when I found high uranium in my well. I thought 'how did it get there?' When I thought of uranium, I thought of atom bombs and nuclear power. It turns out uranium is also found in some rocks. I learned there are different types of uranium. All types are radioactive, but the uranium in my well water is a less radioactive type. It is this radiation that can cause cancer. But with the amount in my well, I was told the bigger concern is kidney damage. The good news is that I haven't been drinking the water for long. I now treat my water. I'm telling all my friends and neighbors to test."