

Babies are at Highest Risk

Infants under six months are particularly at risk from drinking well-water bearing excessive nitrates.

Nitrates reduce the ability of the blood to carry oxygen. In severe cases this can cause babies to turn blue. (Methemoglobinemia)

Immediate medical attention is necessary, because this serious condition can become fatal for these infants. (Older children and adults do not appear to be affected.)

Nitrate levels in well water tend to be highest in heavily-farmed areas. Fertilizer applications and animal manure are the principal sources of nitrates, which sink down into the water table from which well water is taken.

Septic tanks can also increase nitrate levels.



Attention Parents!!!

Are you protecting your baby from possible nitrate poisoning?

Have you tested your well water for nitrates?

The U.S. Public Health Service recommends that there be no more than 10 mg/L of nitrate-nitrogen in drinking water.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Since infants are most at risk, breast-feed your child if at all possible.

Never give your baby well water, or mix infant feeding formula with well water that hasn't first been tested safe for nitrate levels.

Have your well water tested months BEFORE your baby is born. Nitrate levels can change based on weather and other environmental situations, so it is recommended to have your well water tested annually.

NOTE: Boiling your water will NOT eliminate nitrates, it will CONCENTRATE them. And most counter-top filtration units will not screen out nitrates. There is no substitute for having your water tested!

How to get your water tested.

Contact NEK Environmental Services (NEKES). NEKES is a non-profit organization that provides environmental services for Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, and Nemaha Counties.

NEKES has a water screening lab in their office located at 201 S. Main Street, Troy, Kansas.

NEKES has a website with information on water testing, fee schedules, and links to organization with water quality information. Our website is: www.nekes.org.

Call NEKES for an appointment to get your private well assessed and your drinking water screened for nitrates, coli form and e-coli bacteria. Our phone number is: 785-985-2778

If your water is not safe...

If tests show that your well has significantly elevated levels of nitrates, you should use one or more of the following water sources for your drinking water:

- ❖ Water from a municipal distribution system;
- ❖ Water from a nearby well that has tested safe;
- ❖ Commercially distilled or bottled water.

NEKES will also advise you on how to correct problems with your private drinking water well.

If you get your water tested and are not sure how to read the results, please call NEKES 785-985-2778.