

# TCE in Private Well Water

**Trichloroethylene (TCE) is a human-made chemical that can get into wells from spills and improper disposal.**

TCE is used in dry cleaning, grease removal, and to make other chemicals. High levels of TCE can affect the kidneys, liver, lung, and immune system and may cause heart defects in unborn babies.

**Test for TCE if you live within a quarter mile of a landfill, industrial site, gas station, or dry cleaner.\***



Use a [Wisconsin certified lab](#).\*

**Take action if the TCE level is high.**

**If the TCE level is between 0.5 and 2.5 µg/L:**



**Everyone** should use a different source of water for drinking, making baby formula, and making foods that take up a lot of water (like oatmeal, rice, and jello).

Options for different water include:



Bottled water



Water from a well without issues



Water from a public system



The water can still be used for bathing, brushing teeth, and washing dishes.

**If the TCE level is between 2.5 and 50 µg/L:**



**Everyone** should use a different source of water for drinking and making foods that take up a lot of water.



Additional actions may be needed for homes with **people who are or may become pregnant**. [Contact DHS staff](#) for assistance.



Find a long-term solution. Options include drilling a new well or installing a certified treatment device.\*

★ = Additional information is available in the *Resource Guide*.



Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
Division of Public Health  
Groundwater and Drinking Water Program

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If the TCE level is above 50 µg/L:



**Everyone** should use a different source of water for drinking, making foods that take up a lot of water, washing hands, bathing, showering, running the dishwasher, and washing machine.



Find a long-term solution. Options include drilling a new well or installing a certified treatment device.\*

### ★ Resource Guide ★



Most labs test for TCE as part of a package with other VOCs. When testing, you should use a lab certified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). You can find a list of certified labs at [dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/labCert/certified-lab-lists](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/labCert/certified-lab-lists).



The DNR provides grants to help address contamination in private wells. Learn about eligibility and covered expenses at [dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/WellCompensation.html](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/WellCompensation.html).



Our *Water Treatment Devices for Private Well Contaminants* fact sheet has information on certified devices for TCE: [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03494.pdf](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03494.pdf).



**You should also test for arsenic, bacteria, and nitrate regularly.**

You can find information on these and other substances to consider testing at [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/private.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/private.htm).

You can find all this information and more at [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/chemical/trichloroethylene.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/chemical/trichloroethylene.htm).

**Questions? Concerns?**

Contact us at  
[DHSEnvHealth@wi.gov](mailto:DHSEnvHealth@wi.gov)  
or 608-266-1120.