

For Immediate Release

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### Free Nitrate-nitrogen Screening for Private Well Owners in the Town of Stockton

Portage County staff will offer a free nitrate screening event on Wednesday September 11, 2019 at the Stockton Town Hall for those residents with private wells in and around the Town of Stockton.

Most residents living in rural areas rely on private wells to supply their drinking water needs. While public and municipal wells are regulated to ensure that water quality meets current drinking water standards, private well owners must assume the responsibility of testing and treating water to ensure that it is safe to drink.

While most of the wells in Wisconsin produce safe drinking water, about 24% of wells in Portage County exceed the safe drinking water standard for nitrate-nitrogen. Nitrate-nitrogen is one of the most common groundwater pollutants in Portage County. There are a number of potential health risks associated with elevated nitrate-nitrogen levels in drinking water, but it can be especially dangerous for unborn children and infants younger than six months. While water may look clean and taste good, the only way to know that it is safe to drink is to have it tested.

This screening is an opportunity for area residents, particularly those who may never have had their water tested, to learn more about nitrate-nitrogen levels through a screening. The screening is a preliminary test that provides an estimate of the nitrate-nitrogen present in the water sample. Staff will be on hand to provide further guidance about the test results and possible next steps.

For private well owners to participate in this free screening opportunity all they need to do is to follow the steps below to collect a sample of water from their well and bring it to the Stockton Town Hall (7252 6<sup>th</sup> St. Custer, WI) on September 11, 2019 from 6 pm until 8 pm. Samples will be analyzed on the spot and results will be given directly to the private well owner or private well owners can leave their samples and pick up their results at a later date.

#### **How to collect your sample:**

1. Identify a source that is not connected to a treatment device. An outside faucet works best.
2. Locate a clean container with a lid to collect the water sample. Label the outside with your name or address
3. Allow the water to run five-10 minutes before collecting your sample.
4. Fill the container with about a half cup of water.

For more information about this free nitrate-nitrogen screening you may contact Jen McNelly, Portage County Water Resources Specialist at 715-346-1334 or mcnellyj@co.portage.wi.us.