



Does your drinking water come from a well? EPA urges well testing for nitrate, files legal action

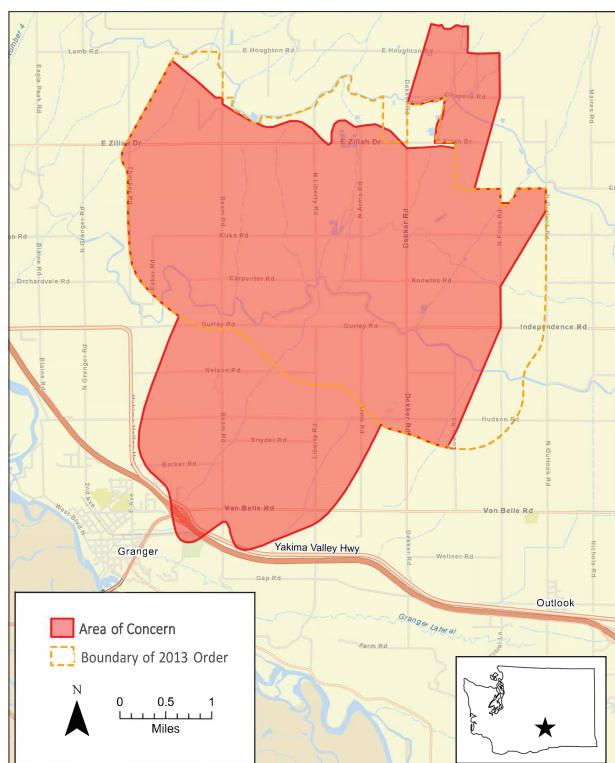
Region 10

July 2024

Your health could be at risk from nitrate-polluted drinking water if you live in an area north of Granger, Washington

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is notifying the community that well water in this area may be polluted with high nitrate levels. Drinking water with too much nitrate can cause serious health problems, especially for babies, people who are pregnant, and people with certain health conditions. The Agency filed a legal action against three nearby dairies identifying them as a source of the nitrate and seeking to require that the dairies take actions to protect nearby community members. As the court considers EPA's requests, EPA recommends community members use free well testing opportunities that are available.

Area of Concern in EPA's Legal Action



Learn if your well water is impacted

As a part of its lawsuit, EPA asked the court to require the dairies to immediately offer free water testing to homes within the area of concern and alternative water if test results are above 10 mg/L nitrate. Use the address lookup tool to learn if your home is in the area of concern:

www.epa.gov/lyvgw.

- Need help? Call us and we can check your address while on the phone with you:
- **(509) 204-1941** (local) or **(888) 508-6344** (toll free).

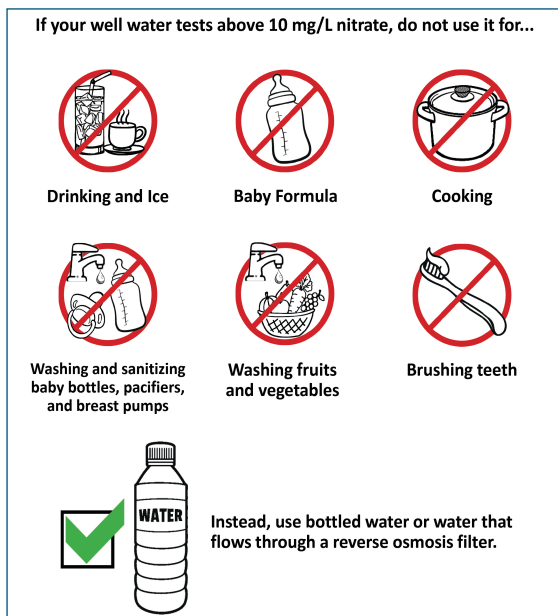
Homes that use residential drinking water wells may be at risk. Homes that receive drinking water from Group A public water systems, which are public water systems under the Safe Drinking Water Act, are not at risk from this nitrate contamination in residential wells. Contact your public water system for information regarding your drinking water.

← If you live in the area of concern highlighted in the map, your health could be at risk from nitrate-polluted drinking water.

Understand the health risks of high nitrate levels

- Too much nitrate makes it harder for red blood cells to carry oxygen. It can cause symptoms within hours or days. While most people recover quickly, it can be dangerous for babies and some adults.
- Babies under 6 months are at high risk. Infants exposed to high amounts of nitrate may develop "blue baby syndrome." This illness is rare, but it can be deadly.
- People who are pregnant or have certain health conditions are also at a higher risk.

Protect your health from nitrate in drinking water



- Do not boil water that is high in nitrate. Boiling water increases nitrate levels.
- You can shower and take a bath in water with high nitrate. Be careful not to swallow water while showering or bathing, especially for babies.
- You can wash clothes in water with high nitrate.
- You can use water high in nitrate to wash most dishes, however, EPA recommends using alternative water to wash and sanitize baby bottles, breast pump parts, pacifiers, and other items that go into an infant's mouth.

Call for free nitrate testing and more information

- Test your well water to see if its nitrate level is above 10 mg/L. Water that has high nitrate levels may look, smell, or taste perfectly normal. The only way to know the nitrate level is to test the well water.
- If your home is located in the area of concern on the map above, your drinking water may be contaminated with high levels of nitrate. Call EPA at **(509) 204-1941** (local) or **(888) 508-6344** (toll free).
- If your home is in Yakima County but outside the area of concern on the map, call the Lower Yakima Valley GWMA Safe Drinking Water Initiative at **(866) 886-7117**.

EPA is taking legal action

The EPA has filed a lawsuit in federal court claiming three large dairies located north of Granger in the Lower Yakima Valley have failed to adequately control nitrate contamination from their operations. EPA's legal action seeks to:

- Ensure that impacted community members have access to free well testing and alternative water, and
- Require the dairies take steps to reduce their nitrate contamination.

EPA is asking the court to order the dairies to immediately:

- Test drinking water wells in the area of concern, and
- Provide alternative drinking water to homes where well water has nitrate levels above 10 mg/L.
- If the court grants EPA's request, EPA will notify the affected homes. Everyone whose wells are contaminated in the area of concern would be able to receive alternative drinking water, regardless of immigration status.

For More Information



For the most up-to-date information, please visit EPA's webpage: www.epa.gov/lyvgw

If you need materials in an alternative format, please contact EPA at **(509) 204-1941** (local) or **(888) 508-6344** (toll free).