

Choose Safe Places

For Early Care and Education

A NH APPLETREE Program



REGISTER NOW: <https://bit.ly/3Fd0NHd>

for FREE Water Testing!

Register soon to avoid delays!

Use the link above or point your phone camera at this QR code:



Private Well Water Testing Initiative for Early Care and Education Providers Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and Responses

Q. Who can participate?

Early Care and Education Providers licensed in the state of New Hampshire (NH) that use a well where there are fewer than 25 people who use the well for drinking water. This number includes **both** children and adults, which means a license capacity of 19 or fewer children. Register online at <https://bit.ly/3Fd0NHd>. If you do not have Internet access, for translation services, or to ask questions, please contact Laurie Rardin, at laurie.r.rardin@dhhs.nh.gov or (603) 271-0357.

Q. How much will it cost?

The testing is free and is approximately a \$500 value. The cost is being covered by a federal grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, focused on well water quality.

Q. Why does testing the water matter?

Drinking water or preparing formula with well water may expose children to harmful contaminants like arsenic, lead and uranium. Since private well water quality is not regulated by the State or Federal government, the only way to know if your water is safe to drink is to test it. Children are more susceptible to the possible negative health effects of consuming water that contains unhealthy levels of contaminants because a child's growing body may absorb more of a particular contaminant than an adult's body, and may be more sensitive to its damaging effects. Ensuring that your child care program's water supply is safe can have a profound impact on a child's lifelong health.

Q. How do I pay for water treatment if there are contaminants over the safe standards?

The DHHS Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration is providing funding to current ARPA Stabilization and CRRSA awardees. These funds will be available in the upcoming Round Two and Three of funding (they do not require any application or direct invoicing) and will be accompanied by recommendations on a percentage that should be "set aside" in anticipation of any water treatment that may be necessary after test results are received. In addition, certain PFAS funding may be available in the near future should you need to address this contaminant in your water and not be an ARPA/CRRSA awardee or exceed your ARPA funding allocation.

Q. What am I supposed to Test for (based on CCLU Rules) and how often?

Contaminant	Frequency
Arsenic	Once every year
Nitrate	Once every year
Nitrite	Once every year
*Stagnant Lead	Once every three years
Stagnant Copper	Once every three years
Fluoride	Once every three years
**Bacteria	Every three months

*Lead testing is also required by state law (RSA 485:17a, which was signed into law in 2018). This law applies regardless of whether a facility gets their water from a well or a town or city public water system. Every drinking fountain, kitchen sink, or faucet that children use must be tested because lead levels vary by outlet. Currently, this faucet-level lead testing is required every five years. To learn more about lead in drinking water visit www.gettheleadoutnh.org



**We are not able to test for bacteria through this Initiative. Please note that the cost for bacteria testing alone is \$15-30 from accredited labs (<https://www4.des.state.nh.us/CertifiedLabs/Certified-Method.aspx>). If you need more information on completing

these quarterly bacteria tests, please see the page included in the **Choose Safe Places Well Water Toolkit for Early Care and Education Providers** (coming in 2-3 weeks) or contact Laurie Rardin at laurie.r.rardin@dhhs.nh.gov or (603) 271-0357.

Q. What will the free Choose Safe Places Private Well Water Testing Initiative test for?

CCLU Required Contaminants  Plus these Additional Contaminants	
Arsenic	Radon
Nitrate	Uranium
Nitrite	PFAS (approximately 25 compounds)
Stagnant Lead	Volatile Organic Compounds (approximately 70 compounds)
Stagnant Copper	Iron
Fluoride	Chloride
	Manganese
	pH
	Hardness
	Sodium

Q. Can this count for my regular well testing requirements under the NH Child Care Licensing Rules?

Yes! This will apply for the 2022 calendar year only. The Toolkit you will receive in 2-3 weeks provides guidance on future water testing. Important Note: You are required to test for bacteria every 3 months, and bacteria are not included as part of this Initiative due to sample collection requirements, as discussed next.

Q. Why is Bacteria NOT included as part of this Initiative?

The bacteria tests need to be completed every 3 months and require a quick turn-around to get to the lab. They are very important to complete on a regular basis. Each bacteria test costs \$15-\$30 depending on your lab of choice. If you opt to participate in this Initiative, that equates to a cost savings to you of approximately \$500.

Q. Do I also have to do the Required Lead Testing?

If you participate in this free testing through the NH Choose Safe Places Private Well Water Testing Initiative, it will include the required lead testing. Therefore you do not need to complete any additional lead testing for this year. However, if you choose not to participate in this free testing, you will have to test for the CCLU required contaminants, and complete the required lead testing on your own. See www.gettheleadoutnh.org for more information.

Q. If I already completed my water testing for this year, why should I participate?

This is still worthwhile, even if you have completed testing for 2022, since it includes many additional contaminants of concern at no charge to you. If you have not completed your testing yet, this opportunity will provide you with a free, easy way to get it done with tools and resources to help you with any questions and next steps.

Q. Who will take the water samples if I participate in this free testing Initiative?

Most of the water samples will be collected by a water sampler from the NHDES at the time and date you set when the sampler calls to set up an appointment. But, you will need to collect the samples for stagnant lead, because these samples must be collected first thing in the morning after the water hasn't been used for 8-18 hours. Stagnant lead sample bottles and detailed instructions on how to collect the samples will be mailed to you after you set your appointment date.

Q. How do I set up a sampling appointment (date and time)?

The NHDES water sampler will contact you to set up the appointment date and time after you register to participate in this free testing Initiative.

Q. What is the sampling (testing) process?

On the day of your water sampling appointment, you will need to collect the water sample for stagnant lead at every drinking water faucet before you run any water in the morning. Water should not be used for 8 – 18 hours prior to collecting your samples. Typically, samples are collected first thing in the morning before children arrive or the water is used to make coffee or flushing the toilet. When the NHDES sampler arrives at the appointed time on your sampling day, the sampler will fill several bottles with water from the primary tap you use for drinking water (usually the kitchen sink). The sampler will take all the samples, including the stagnant lead samples you collected first thing in the morning, back to the Public Health Lab.

Q. Will it interrupt my day (how long will the testing take)?

It should take you approximately 15-20 minutes to collect the stagnant lead samples, depending on how many faucets you have. The visit from the NHDES water sampler should take 15-20 minutes, and you will only need to connect with the sampler for 5-10 minutes initially and about five minutes before the sampler leaves.

Q. How do the water samples get to the Lab?

The water samples will be brought to the Public Health Lab by the NHDES water sampler.

Q. When will I get the results?

Your water test results will be returned to you within 6-8 weeks after your sampling date.

Q. Why does it take so long to get my results back?

Laboratory Testing facilities are experiencing backlogs due to a variety of reasons. We have provided this estimated timeframe but hope to be able to return the results to you within a shorter time period.

Q. How do I understand my test results?

*We will provide your test results in a simple summary that shows which contaminants are present at safe levels and which ones are above the safe standard. You can also put your test results into the **Be Well Informed** online web tool <https://www4.des.state.nh.us/DWITool/Welcome.aspx> by typing them into the appropriate sections in the entry page. Or contact Laurie Rardin, the Choose Safe Places program leader, at laurie.r.rardin@dhhs.nh.gov, or (603) 271-0357, to discuss your water test results.*

Q. If I have elevated contaminant levels in my water, why does that matter?

Drinking water or preparing formula with well water may expose children to harmful contaminants such as arsenic, lead and uranium. Since private well water quality is not regulated by the State or Federal government, the only way to know if your water is safe to drink is to test it. Children are more susceptible to the possible negative health effects of consuming water that contains unhealthy levels of contaminants because a child's growing body may absorb more of a particular contaminant than an adult's body, and may be more sensitive to its damaging effects. Ensuring that your child care program's water supply is safe can have a profound impact on a child's lifelong health.

Q. Who do I report my test results to?

Programs that receive test results above safe levels must report them to the Child Care Licensing Unit (CCLU) as required by the Rules, as described below. The CCLU staff will assist programs in the development of a plan that will allow the program to remain open while keeping children and staff safe from exposure to contaminated water. Additionally, programs must keep a copy of the water test results available on-site for review by CCLU staff or the local health official.

Q. Besides CCLU, do I need to report results from the water tests to anyone else if they are over the safe standard?

*We recommend that you report the results to the parents of the children in your care when the results of tests for any contaminant, exceed the required levels. State law **requires** that you notify parents and guardians of any lead exceedances. Your lead test results need to be reported to the NHDES by contacting info@gettheleadoutnh.org or (603) 506-6469.*

Q. What do I do if there are contaminants in my water over the safe standard?

*Your test results package will indicate if there are contaminants present in your water at concerning levels. The **Choose Safe Places Well Water Toolkit for Early Care and Education Providers** (coming soon!) provides information on which treatment types remove which contaminants and the types of treatment that might be suitable based on your specific water test results. As stated above, notify the CCLU at: <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/oos/cclu>, 1-800-852-3345, ext. 9025, 271-9025.*

Specifically, within 30 days of the date you learn that your facility is over a safe standard you need to: Submit to the CCLU an acceptable corrective action plan which details what action will be taken to correct the unsafe condition of the water and a date by which that action will be complete, unless the program requests, either verbally or in writing, and the department agrees, to extend that deadline, based on the following criteria; 1. The program demonstrates that it has made a good faith effort to develop and submit the corrective action plan within the 30 day period but has been unable to do so; and 2. The department determines that the health, safety or well-being of children will not be jeopardized as a result of granting the extension.

Q. What are the legal or licensing consequences if I can't or don't take care of an exceedance over the safe standard within 30 days?

When a program fails to submit a written proposed corrective action plan within 30 days of receiving the unacceptable test result under the CCLU Rules, the department shall initiate action to suspend the license or permit in accordance with He-C 4002.44(q) and (r), until such time as laboratory results meeting those requirements are received by the department.

Q. Will this Initiative be a permanent testing option?

This testing Initiative applies for the 2022 calendar year only. **Register as soon as possible to avoid delays!** **The Choose Safe Places Well Water Toolkit for Early Care and Education Providers** (coming soon!) provides guidance on future water testing.

Q. Can I test the water myself or does a professional have to do it?

You can test your water yourself with the help of a testing lab when this Initiative ends or if you choose not to participate. You would need to request a water test kit from an accredited private lab (<https://www4.des.state.nh.us/CertifiedLabs/Certified-Method.aspx>). After you receive the test kit, you follow the directions provided to collect the samples.

Q. Will the well water test results (for my Child Care) be posted somewhere?

Your test results will be confidential (with the exception of the stagnant lead testing results). Results will be shared as part of a summary report, but individual results will not be shared. The data may also be summarized and included in a public health database showing water contaminants in NH to guide public health protection efforts, or be used to study risk to Child Care facilities, but will never be used in a way that could identify you, your Child Care facility, or your street address.

Q. Who do I call if I don't understand my test results or potential health concerns?

Contact Laurie Rardin, Choose Safe Places Program Leader, at laurie.r.rardin@dhhs.nh.gov or (603) 271-0357.

Q. Will my participation in this free testing improve my ability to promote my Child Care Program?

Yes! Once you learn that your water tests show that you are within all safe standards, you can promote your safe water quality and environmental health best practices. To get an official certification as an "Eco-Healthy Child Care," you can complete the Eco-Healthy Child Care Checklist <https://cehn.org/our-work/eco-healthy-child-care/ehcc-sign-up-form/#join> from the Children's Environmental Health Network. Take the free Eco-Healthy Child Care training on environmental health best practices available at https://www.prosolutionstraining.com/store/product/?tProductVersion_id=2236 which counts toward your NH Health and Safety training.

Q. What is the Well Water Toolkit?

You will receive a **Choose Safe Places Well Water Toolkit for Early Care and Education Providers** in 2-3 weeks. The toolkit will guide you through the water testing and treatment process for this Initiative and for years to follow when you are completing it on your own in accordance with the Child Care Licensing Unit (CCLU) Rules.

Q. Will there be more information for child care providers about drinking water safety?

Yes! The Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration will be recording several webinars with the Choose Safe Places team that discuss the importance of testing and safe drinking water. Short videos including a "how to" for reading your testing results and taking the next steps, plus a quick overview for parents will also be coming in June, so **watch your email for more information.**

Questions?

Contact Laurie Rardin, Choose Safe Places Program Leader, at laurie.r.rardin@dhhs.nh.gov or (603) 271-0357.

Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education is a part of the APPLETREE Program, implemented by the NH Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with the NH Department of Environmental Services, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The APPLETREE Program is the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Partnership to Promote Local Efforts to Reduce Environmental Exposures.

