

WATER WEDNESDAY: Why You Should Test Your Water

If you have a private well (which ~90% of homes in Truro do), the homeowner is responsible for any water quality testing. Although you are required to do water testing in certain circumstances, testing your well water regularly is important for understanding water quality. The sandy soil in Truro allows contaminants to travel easily in the groundwater and water can taste fine but still contain impurities. Some naturally occurring substances such as iron might cause discoloration or a metallic taste, but often there is no perceivable indication of an issue.

The most common issue found in Truro well water is high sodium or high nitrates. Sodium sources include road salt, water softeners, or from saltwater intrusion into the ground water. High sodium can be an issue for those who need a low sodium diet for health reasons. Nitrates come from organic decomposition and have several natural sources including fertilizer use, farm runoff, or septic system effluent. Some minerals can cause health effects at elevated concentrations but aren't as common. Minerals can cause potentially expensive issues with pipe damage and make your water look, smell, or taste bad.

Annual routine testing is recommended. For further information please visit the Barnstable County Water Quality Laboratory site: <https://www.capecod.gov/departments/health-environment/programs-services/water-and-wastewater/water-quality-laboratory/> Fact sheets for sodium and nitrate can be found here: <https://www.capecod.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/sodium.pdf> and <https://www.capecod.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/nitrate.pdf>. Fact sheets on other contaminants are available on the county website.

