

Appendix A: Well testing recommendations

Province/ territory	Resource	Testing recommendations			
		Frequency (microbiology)	Parameters (microbiology)	Frequency (chemistry)	Parameters (chemistry)
BC	Health link BC, Well water testing (2025)	Once per year	TC, <i>E. coli</i>	At construction and annually thereafter*	Nitrates, fluoride, metals (As, Pb, Cu, Mn)
AB	Testing your drinking water in Alberta (2024)	Twice per year	TC, <i>E. coli</i>	Every three years	Chemicals and trace metals (not specified)
SK	Getting Water Tested (2021)	Once per year	TC	Once per year	Nitrate
MB	Private Well Information (2019)	Once per year	TC, <i>E. coli</i>	At construction, then every three-five years thereafter unless an issue is suspected	Nitrate, metals (As, Ba, B, Mn, U), fluoride, depending on location
ON	Testing and treating private water wells (2021)	Regularly, and in response to events	TC, <i>E. coli</i>	In response to concerns	Examples: Fluoride, metals (Fe, Mn, As, U, Ra), fuels, nitrate, salt, methane, sulphate, solvents, hardness
QU	My well water. Test if for your health and the health of your family (2024)	Twice per year	<i>E. coli</i> or enterococcus	Twice per year	Nitrates and nitrites in agricultural zones or on properties with septic tanks
NB	Testing Private Water Supplies (n.d.)	Twice per year	TC, <i>E. coli</i>	Every two-three years or more if needed	As, U, fluoride, nitrates; petroleum products or pesticides if likely present
NL	Groundwater wells: What you need to know (n.d.)	Twice per year	TC, <i>E. coli</i>	Every two years	Refers to Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines
NS	Test Your Well Water (2020)	Twice per year	Bacteria	Every two years	32 parameters (18 metals, plus water quality parameters)
PEI	Testing of Drinking Water (2025)	Once per year	TC, <i>E. coli</i>	At construction then every two years	12 metals (As, Ba, Cd, Cr, Cu, Fe, Pb, Mn, Sb, Se, U, Zn) chloride, hardness, pH, sulphate, Nitrate N
YT	Get your drinking water tested (2026)	Once per year	TC, <i>E. coli</i>	At construction and annually for two years, then every five	30 parameters (18 metals, plus water quality parameters)
Health Canada	Well water and your health: Test your well water (2024)	Twice per year	TC, <i>E. coli</i>	Every two years for general water quality parameters, or more frequent if at risk for other contaminants	If at risk for As, Cu, Pb, Mn, U, nitrate and nitrite, VOCs/SVOCs if fire damage or fuel spill; additional metals, hydrocarbons, PFAS, if needed

* Some Health Authorities state that if there is no significant change in chemical parameters after two years of annual testing, testing frequency can reduce to every five years, unless there is a suspected contamination event.

n.d. = no date; TC = Total coliforms; general water quality parameters may include but are not limited to pH, alkalinity, ammonia, chloride, hardness, sodium sulphate, total dissolved solids, dissolved organic carbon, conductivity, turbidity, taste, odour, colour.