

Are you on a private well? Does your well water contain lead?

Residents of Jackson County served by private water wells may be eligible for free testing of their well water for lead. Jackson County Health Department is participating in a research project with researchers from the University of Illinois and Northern Illinois University to better determine the presence of lead in private water wells in three Illinois counties. While public water supplies have strict regulations and oversight related to lead, there is sparse data on lead in private well water supplies. Lead in drinking water can damage brain development in children, and progress to kidney damage in adults, as well as other health concerns.

According to Bart Hagston, Director of the Division of Environmental Health and Emergency Preparedness, "We are excited for Jackson County to participate in this research project and help collect data on the presence of lead in private drinking water supplies. This will save residents the \$40 cost to test their well water themselves. What we need now is to have residents served by private water wells to contact us to initiate participation."

Jackson County residents interested in participating in the project should contact Jackson County Health Department. Health department staff will ask a few simple questions to help determine eligibility for the study. Ultimately, 75 participants will be selected for the project. Residents from all over Jackson County served by private water wells are needed. Participants may be homeowners or renters.

Those selected to participate will have a water sample kit delivered to their home by health department staff. Staff will go through the sampling instructions and answer any questions. Samples will be shipped to the laboratory in a provided box with a prepaid shipping label. Test results will be sent to the resident in about two months. ***The project is expected to conclude by January 2019.***

Please contact Jackson County Health Department at 618/684-3143, ext. 128 to inquire about participating in this valuable research study.

