



Island County

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Drinking Water - Winter 2026

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Drinking Water Winter 2026

Happy New Year!



We wish you well (water pun intended)! This time of year is a great time to make goals and plans for the year ahead.

Do your goals include drinking more water?



Drinking water is [great](#) for your body and mind. Reusable water bottles can remind you to drink water, reduce plastic waste and plastic pollution, and save money. Regularly [wash](#) your water bottle to keep your water safe.



Do your plans include buying land or building a new home?

Check the [ICGeoMap](#) to see if a public water system serves, or is nearby and may be able to serve, the address or parcel. To save time and money, contact the water system(s) before drilling a well.



Do your goals or plans relate to your water system?

The [Whidbey Island Water Systems Association](#), a non-profit organization, provides resources, news, and networking opportunities for water systems on both Whidbey and Camano Islands.

Water Wisdom

Water seems simple, yet understanding drinking water can be complicated. Here we provide the tools to understand, ask questions, and make educated decisions.

Water Quality - Nitrate

What is it? Nitrate (NO_3^-) is a chemical that occurs naturally at low levels. Human activities, like applying manure and fertilizers to crops and lawns and using septic systems, can increase nitrate levels in drinking water sources.

How it impacts you: consuming too much nitrate can be harmful. Drinking water with nitrate over the maximum contaminant level, [10 mg/L](#), can cause [serious health problems](#) for infants, pregnant women, and people with preexisting health conditions. Testing is the only way to ensure that harmful levels of nitrate are not present. Federal, state, and county laws require that public water systems test drinking water for nitrate regularly. Individual water systems should test annually.

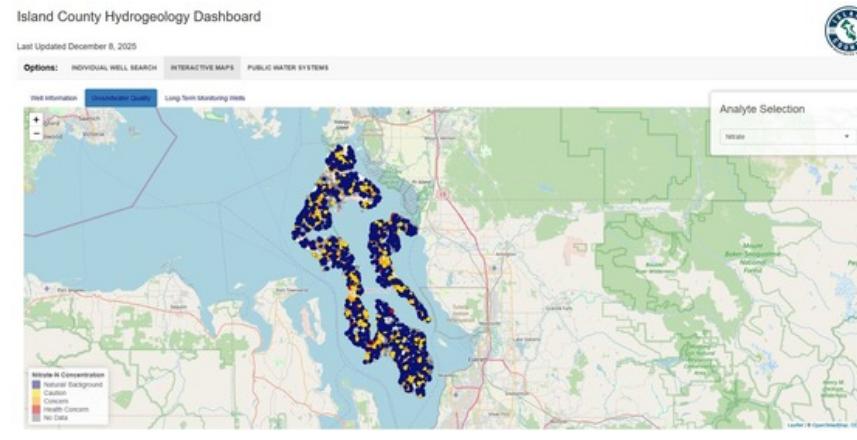
How to test for it: water samples can be sent to a [state accredited lab](#) to be analyzed for nitrate within 48 hours of collecting the sample. Eurofins-Edge Analytical provides sample bottles at the Island County Public Health offices in Coupeville and on Camano Island, as well as at B&W Pump Co. in Freeland and Island H2O Systems in Oak Harbor. [Drop off locations](#) are also available. [Sampling instructions](#) can be found on the back of the lab form with the sample bottle.

How to understand the test results: the lab report will show Nitrate-N as the analyte and either ND or a number for the result. ND means that nitrate was not detected by the lab equipment. 0-2 mg/L indicates naturally occurring nitrate levels. Over 2 mg/L indicates that human activities have increased the nitrate levels. Over 10 mg/L indicates that nitrate has exceeded the maximum contaminant level and additional action may be required.

Next steps: if nitrate is present at levels above 10 mg/L, use an alternative source of water for drinking. The contaminated water can be used for bathing, handwashing, and dishwashing. All public water system customers should be notified right away. Additionally, Group A Public Water Systems should notify the Washington State Department of Health and Group B Public Water Systems should notify Island County Public Health. Inspect the condition of the well and surrounding area, reduce fertilizer and manure use, inspect and repair septic systems, and test again. If test results are still above 10 mg/L, talk with a water professional about [options](#).

Hydrogeology Dashboard - Nitrate

To see nitrate levels in wells across Island County, check out the [Hydrogeology Dashboard](#) (click OK on the disclaimer pop-up, click on Interactive Maps, click on Groundwater Quality, and choose nitrate from the drop-down list under Analyte Selection).



Resources

Want to find information about your well or water system? Check out our [Hydrogeology Map](#) and [Hydrogeology Dashboard](#).

Need to measure the water level in your well? A water level tape is available to borrow from [Island County Public Health](#).

Have drinking water questions? Check out our [Drinking Water webpage](#).

Still have questions? Email us at drinkingwater@islandcountywa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in Island County Drinking Water.

For more information, contact us at drinkingwater@islandcountywa.gov.

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