

# Be well water aware this spring

As a result of this year's snowfall throughout the region, the frequency and severity of flash floods are expected to increase this spring.

"Spring runoff" is a term used to describe the influx of contaminants leeching into water systems after snow melts as the temperature rises during March and April.

These floods should be of particular concern to residents using private wells, given the vulnerability of wells during this period.

According to the Ministry of Health: "Get in the habit of water testing. Next to properly maintaining your well, testing is your best strategy for playing it safe.

Test your well water at least three times a year for bacteria. Always test water after major plumbing work or after a flooding."

Bacterial contamination may provide the greatest threat to private well users.

UV Light boxes and chlorine treatments are examples of proven techniques used to fight contaminants such as E. Coli.

In order to ensure a sterile water analyses, a) remove the aerator and b) run a lit match quickly around the end of the faucet prior to taking a sample. This will help kill any bacteria clinging to the hardware.

Nitrates are a very common issue, and

should be tested for regularly.

With no taste or smell, nitrates can have adverse health effects if unchecked in your water. Infants, for example, cannot safely absorb nitrates because their stomach acid is not strong enough to convert it.

Other common contaminants include: arsenic, fertilizers, pesticides, as well as other agricultural chemicals like the highly-publicized herbicide Atrazine.

Overall, water contamination affects children more powerfully than adults.

In fact, a recent issue of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) urged people to test private wells, since

different bacteria and contaminants can be very harmful to children.

"Drinking water for roughly one-sixth of U.S. households comes from private wells, of which there is little regulation. With proper care, well water is extremely safe. However, these wells can become contaminated by chemicals or pathogenic organisms," reads the AAP report.

Water experts suggest well water users have their water tested at least once a year for contamination, and urge proactive measures to keep you, and your family safe during this year's spring runoff.

—Article courtesy of Jack Driscoll, Georgetown Culligan



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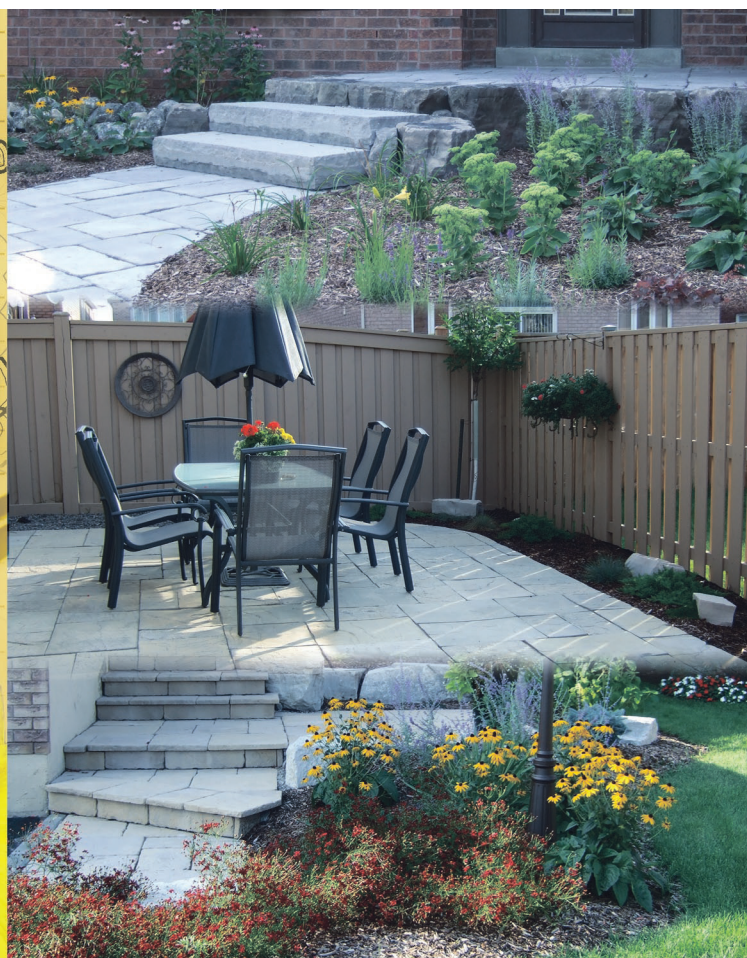
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