

# NJ Department of Health Private Well Testing Outreach: Reducing Exposure to Gross Alpha in Drinking Water



## Why did I receive this letter?

We have funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support well testing for wells at high risk of gross alpha contamination. Letters are being sent to well owners with a **high gross alpha result** tested through the Private Well Testing Act (PwTA) from 2018-2021. Letters are also being sent to neighbors of those wells because they are at **high risk of gross alpha contamination**. All high gross alpha results are confidential, and we do not disclose the location of any wells.



## How can I participate?

You can register online with **this registration link** – [bit.ly/GrossAlpha](https://bit.ly/GrossAlpha). You will receive a confirmation email and will receive a phone call from a certified laboratory to schedule sample collection in the weeks to follow.



## What is gross alpha?

Gross alpha is a measurement of radioactivity in drinking water. In North Jersey, elements such as **radium** and **uranium** contribute to gross alpha radioactivity through the process of radioactivity decay. These elements are naturally occurring contaminants that are found in underlying bedrock material.



## Why test for gross alpha?

Gross alpha is **colorless, tasteless, and odorless** in drinking water and testing is the only way to identify its presence in drinking water. Drinking elevated levels of gross alpha can increase the risk of adverse health effects such as bone and sinus cancer, anemia, and kidney damage.

## \$ Who is paying for this well testing?

Participation in this event is **FREE**. The typical cost of this testing is \$500. The NJ Department of Health is covering the expenses for this **free** private well testing through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to support programs which aim to reduce hazardous exposure in private well water.



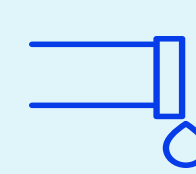
## Who is going to conduct the water sampling?

The NJ Department of Health is contracting with **EMSL Analytical, Inc.** to conduct the water sampling. After registering online, the lab will follow-up with you to schedule the best day and time for your free water testing.



## How will I receive my gross alpha test results?

You will receive water test results via mail and email directly from NJDOH. **Your results will remain confidential.** Only a summary of overall findings will be sent to your local health department.



## If gross alpha is found in my well, will I have to purchase water treatment?

If gross alpha is found in your well water we recommend water treatment – typically a **water softener or a combination of water softener and anion exchange system are recommended**. However, the decision to treat your water is voluntary. **There is no requirement to install treatment.** We are not associated with any water treatment companies and will not sell your information to anyone. Instead, we follow strict rules for data confidentiality and security.



## What is the NJ Private Well Testing Act (PwTA)?

The New Jersey Private Well Testing Act (N.J.S.A. 58:12A-26 et seq.) is a law that became effective in September 2002. The PwTA requires the buyer or the seller of a property to test the untreated well water prior to the sale and to review the results prior to closing of the title. It also requires landlords to test the private well water supplied to their tenants every five years and provide their tenants with a written copy of the results.



## How can I get more information?

The NJ Department of Health has been funded since 2015 to conduct targeted outreach to well owners in New Jersey who may be at high-risk of well contamination. We have worked with communities throughout the state to conduct private well outreach. You can contact your Local Health Department for more information about this project

(<https://www.state.nj.us/health/lh/community/>) or visit the NJ Department of Health Environmental and Occupational Health Surveillance Program - Drinking Water, Hazardous Waste Sites Program website (link at bottom) to send us an email or give us a call (609) 826-4984. You can also contact our program team members directly:

- Jessie Gleason ([jessie.gleason@doh.nj.gov](mailto:jessie.gleason@doh.nj.gov))
- Rebecca Schwartz ([rebecca.schwartz@doh.nj.gov](mailto:rebecca.schwartz@doh.nj.gov))