

Safe Well Water RI

Trusted, expert information

Tip Sheet 16



“Tip sheets helped us learn about our well water.”

Get Tip Sheets at www.rivelltesting.org:

- 14 Tip Sheets about harmful substances
- 10 Tip Sheets about treatment choices
- 3 Tip Sheets about other topics of concern

Look for the NSF seal on water treatment devices.

NSF International is a non-profit group that sets performance standards for water treatment devices. Learn about NSF here: www.nsf.org

Need to treat your well water? Learn and ask about choices.

First steps: Test, learn, and call us

- **Test** your water before thinking about treatment. Use a State-certified testing lab. Find a list of certified labs here: www.health.ri.gov/find/labs/privatewelltesting.
- **Learn** about well water problems and solutions with easy to read Tip Sheets at www.rivelltesting.org.
- **Call and talk** with a State water quality expert. We can review your water test results with you and suggest ways to treat problems. We can talk with you about whether you need a whole-house treatment system or can get by with a point-of-use system just for drinking and cooking.
 - » University of Rhode Island Water Quality Program
Direct line to water expert: 401-874-5398
 - » Rhode Island Department of Health
Ask for the Private Well Program: 401-222-5960

All treatment systems have tradeoffs – good and bad points.

As you think about buying a treatment system, consider the tradeoffs.
Examples:

- ▶ **Whole-house or point-of-use system** Whole-house treats all household water for drinking, cooking, showers, clothes washing, etc. Point-of-use systems treat just the water used for drinking or cooking, and may be installed on just the kitchen tap. Depending on your water problem and needs, you may have a choice of systems.
- ▶ **Costs** to purchase, install, and maintain
- ▶ **Effort needed to maintain** including part replacement
- ▶ **Who will do the maintenance?**
- ▶ **Possible need to ‘flush’ or ‘backwash’** the system. This can lead to an extra load on your septic system.
- ▶ **The need to deal with substances added** to water by the treatment system. For example, an ion exchange system to remove iron and manganese may add sodium (salt) to water—which then might need to be removed.
- ▶ **How long will the system last?**



Call us! University of Rhode Island Water Quality Program (401) 874-5398
Rhode Island Department of Health (401) 222-5960



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Be a wise consumer. Check on quality of systems and services.

- **Compare products** from at least 3 companies for price, quality, and warranty.
- **Ask each company** for customer satisfaction references and check them out!
- **Ask how** you will know if the system is working correctly.
- **Test your water** after you install a system to make sure it's working.

Two groups can help you choose quality products and services.

1. **NSF International** Find them here: www.nsf.org. This is a non-profit group that sets performance standards for water treatment equipment. They make sure that what the equipment maker says in their advertising is actually true. Look for this NSF logo on products that meet their standards. 
2. **The Water Quality Association (WQA)** Find them here: www.wqa.org. This is a not-for-profit trade association of people involved in the water treatment industry. They certify water treatment businesses, sales, and equipment installers who have passed written exams. When you shop for treatment equipment, ask if the dealer is a WQA member and if employees are WQA-certified specialists. Look for the gold seal logo on water treatment products certified by WQA. 

See easy to read Tip Sheets about these treatment systems.

| Treatment System | Use |
|--|---|
| Activated Carbon Filter Tip Sheet 17 | Removes chlorine, VOCs, some SOCs, and general taste and odor problems |
| Aeration Tip Sheet 18 | Removes dissolved gases like radon, methane, and hydrogen sulfide, as well as MtBE (Methyl tertiary-Butyl Ether). Can also be used to remove dissolved iron and manganese. |
| Distillation Tip Sheet 20 | Removes dissolved minerals, trace amounts of metals, and some toxic chemicals |
| Ion Exchange Tip Sheet 21 | <i>Cation</i> exchange units remove iron, manganese, arsenic, chromium, calcium, and magnesium <i>Anion</i> exchange units remove nitrates, bicarbonate, selenium, and sulfate |
| Microfiltration Tip Sheet 22 | Removes small particles and suspended solids such as iron, clay, silt and sand, and some bacteria and viruses |
| Neutralizing Filter Tip Sheet 12 | Adjusts the pH of water |
| Ozone Tip Sheet 23 | Can kill certain bacteria and viruses; improve some color, taste, and odor problems; remove iron and manganese; increase how clear water is |
| Reverse Osmosis Tip Sheet 24 | Removes more pollutants than any other treatment system except distillation |
| Ultraviolet Radiation Tip Sheet 25 | Can kill certain forms of bacteria, viruses, and other 'germs' |
| Activated Alumina Call us | Removes fluoride and arsenic |

We're here to help with your well water questions.

Talk with a water quality expert or find easy to read Tip Sheets.

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