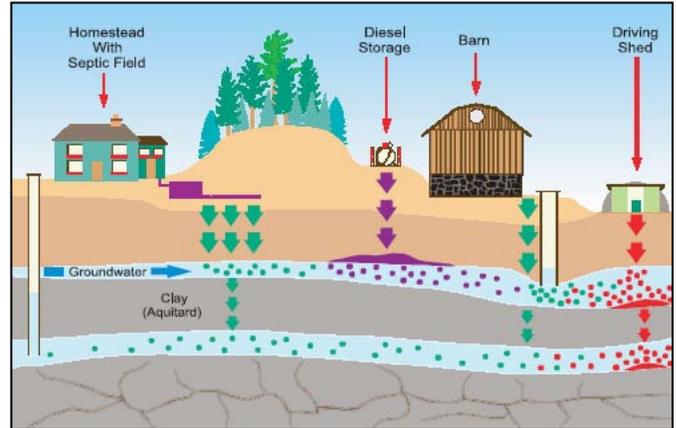


# Ground Water Recommendations for Homeowners

## Ten simple tips for protecting your drinking water and water quality in local lakes and streams

Ground water is the water that soaks into the land surface from precipitation. It is naturally filtered as it percolates through the soil and bedrock and fills cracks and other openings in beds of rock and sand. Ground water in the Oneida Lake watershed eventually flows into Oneida Lake and nearby tributaries, but it can be contaminated by pollutants at the earth's surface. Simple actions taken by homeowners can help to protect ground and surface water quality. The following recommendations are designed to reduce pollution from entering the ground water and nearby lakes and streams.



- **Get an annual well maintenance checkup by a qualified professional** to ensure problem-free service and good water quality. Always use licensed or certified water well drillers and pump installers when a well is constructed or serviced.
- **Test your water on an annual basis** and especially if there has been a flood or if you notice a change in taste, odor, or appearance. EPA recommends that you test your water each year for total Coliform bacteria, nitrates, total dissolved solids and pH levels.
- **Safely dispose of all unused, unwanted, and expired prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicines.** Contact your local pharmacy, county recycling coordinator, or municipality for advice on proper disposal opportunities. Never place medicine down the drain, toilet, or garbage disposal where it could impact surface and ground water quality. Additional information on disposal options is available at the following website: [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/45189.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/45189.html)
- **Keep all hazardous chemicals, such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides, and motor oil far away from your well.**
- **Consult a professional for the proper placement of your well.** Maintain a "clean" zone of at least 50 feet between your well and septic system, and 100-300 feet from the well to the septic leach field. Slope the ground away from the well for proper drainage.
- **Periodically check the cover or well cap** on top of the well to ensure it is in good repair and securely attached. Maintain a tight seal to keep out insects and rodents. Keep the well cap or vent at least 1.5 feet above the ground surface.
- **Avoid piling snow, leaves or other materials around the well.**
- **Take care when working or mowing around your well.** A damaged casing can endanger the sanitary protection of the well and ground water.
- **Contact a qualified well contractor to seal old, unused wells.**
- **Keep your well records in a safe place.** These include the construction report, annual water well system maintenance, and water quality test results.

Additional information about ground water and well maintenance is available at [www.wellowner.org](http://www.wellowner.org). Check with your municipal office or professional water well contractor to learn more about the local codes.

This fact sheet was created by the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board with funding provided by the Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance through the Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District. Additional information about the Oneida Lake watershed is available at [www.oneidalakewatershed.org](http://www.oneidalakewatershed.org) or by calling 315-422-8276.