Pesticides and Herbicides
Routine testing for pesticides and herbicides associated with home lawn care and gardening and commercial agriculture is expensive, and may not be needed unless your home is located in an area with known problems. However, such testing might be warranted if your water has elevated nitrite/nitrate concentrations or significant amounts of pesticide have been applied near the well.

Volatile and Synthetic Organic Chemicals
The most common volatile organic chemicals (VOC’s) include industrial solvents and gasoline compounds such as MTBE and benzene. Synthetic organic chemicals (SOC’s) include a variety of carbon-based chemicals used in industry, some household products and agricultural formulations.

If your home is located in an area with gasoline stations, commercial industry, landfills, or agriculture, periodic testing for VOC’s and SOC’s may be appropriate for your well.

Arsenic
Arsenic is a naturally occurring metal that is toxic to humans and animals. While most areas of Connecticut may have little or no arsenic present in the groundwater, it is recommended that you have your well tested at least once to be sure that arsenic concentrations are below any levels of concern.

Lead and Copper
If your home was built before 1986, within the last five (5) years, or the pH (acidity) of your well water is below 7.0, you should test for lead and copper. Copper plumbing, certain brass fixtures and solder containing lead may be in your home.

Contact your local health department or the DPH Drinking Water Division for more information on how to properly sample for lead and copper.

What the Tests Will Tell You
Results will reveal the level at which any of the tested substances were found in your water sample. The mere presence of some contaminants in well water does not necessarily imply that there is a problem. However, when levels exceed state or federal health standards, you should take steps to correct the situation. First, make sure that your well is properly constructed and sealed from the outside environment. If treatment is needed, contact a licensed commercial contractor to determine what water treatment options are available to treat the contaminated water in your well. The DPH Drinking Water Division website also has informational documents concerning all common drinking water quality problems and their solutions.

For More Information
For more information about water quality testing for private wells and preventing well contamination, contact the CT DPH Drinking Water Division:

Connecticut Department of Public Health
Drinking Water Division
410 Capitol Avenue, MS#51WAT
P.O. Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134-0308
(860) 509-7333
www.dph.state.ct.us/BR/WS/Water/DWD.htm

You can also contact your local health department. To find a directory of local health departments, visit the DPH website:
www.dph.state.ct.us/Local_Healthy/index.asp

For additional information on how to interpret the test results you can visit the Environmental Protection Agency’s Groundwater and Drinking Water website:
www.epa.gov/OGWDW/mcl.html#mcls

Remember that maintaining, protecting, and periodically testing your private well all go hand-in-hand when it comes to protecting you and your family’s health from drinking water contamination.
Steps to Protect Your Well

Steps you and your family members can take to protect your well include:

- Know where your well is located
- Be sure that the well has a cap or sanitary seal to prevent unauthorized use of, or entry into, the well
- Periodically inspect exposed parts of the well for problems such as:
  - cracked, corroded, or damaged well casing;
  - broken or missing well cap;
  - cracking of surface seals
- Slope the area around the well to drain surface runoff away from the well
- Do not cut off the well casing below the land surface
- Hire a certified well driller for any new well construction, modification, or abandonment
- Avoid mixing or using pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, degreasers, fuels, and other pollutants near the well
- Do not dispose of wastes in dry wells or in abandoned wells
- Pump and inspect septic systems as often as recommended by your local health department
- Never dispose of hazardous materials in a septic system
- If you have a dug well, it is very important that the well is properly protected from surface water infiltration commonly associated with poor construction or disrepair and from the entry of insects and rodents

Although more tests could be added, this list provides a reasonable approach to determining the overall water quality of your private well.

Every few years, consider additional tests to cover other contaminants of concern.