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La Crosse County Health Laboratory is encouraging all private well owners to test their drinking water for coliform bacteria and nitrate during National Public Health Week, April 4 to April 8. The two tests can be obtained for \$24 during this week.

The regular fee is \$47.

Coliform bacteria are an indicator of contamination and should not be present in drinking water.

Their presence indicates disease causing bacteria, viruses and parasites may have contaminated the well.

Nitrate

is a chemical found in fertilizers, manure and discharges from septic tanks and is responsible for "blue baby syndrome," a serious health condition-affecting infants.

Nitrate has also been linked to birth defects, miscarriages and cancer.

Contact La Crosse County Health Laboratory at 608-785-9733 for more information about water testing. Water sample kits can be picked up at the Health Department weekdays between 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM.