



Name: _____

Date: _____

High School Lesson

True/False

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1. An unusually warm month of March means Santa Clara County’s retail water companies, municipal utilities and private citizens rely more heavily on wells to quench their thirst and keep their gardens green.

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2. The source of that water – the county’s groundwater basins – is under continued threats of contamination.

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3. Roughly half of the county’s annual drinking water supplies are pumped from groundwater basins through some 6,000 wells owned by municipalities, retail water companies or individuals.

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4. Although water from groundwater basins is traditionally of very high quality, the basins are threatened by industrial spills, leaking underground fuel storage tanks and agricultural applications, as well as biological pathogens from cracked sewer lines, septic systems, livestock facilities and other sources.

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5. There is no local, regional or state agency responsible for maintaining and testing private wells.

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6. The water district urges well-owners to conduct annual well “checkups,” including maintenance inspections and water-testing.

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7. There are dozens of tests that can be performed on drinking water and no one analysis can assure that water from a specific well is “safe to drink.”

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8. The water district recommends that well owners have samples tested for Total coliform bacteria and Nitrate.

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9. The presence of Total coliform bacteria indicates that the water may be contaminated with other disease-causing organisms.

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10. Nitrate is a naturally occurring compound that, at high levels, is a health risk for infants younger than 6 months of age, pregnant women and people with certain specific enzyme deficiencies.

Put a check by items the water district recommends including in an annual well checkup:

- Inspection of the wellhead, looking for openings where insects, rodents, water or anything else can enter.
- Inspection for cracks in the concrete pad that could allow water, or contaminants it may be carrying, to follow the well casing into a drinking water aquifer.
- Inspection for water flowing out of the top of the well, which can waste water and/or allow contaminants in.
- Clearing away overgrown vegetation and debris, which can create homes for rodents and other pests. (Do not use herbicides around your well.)
- Making sure the well-registration number is still visible, as locally required.

For more information about groundwater and other topics, visit www.valleywater.org.