

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR WELL RUNS DRY

Your well system works by inserting a pump inside a drilled hole to bring water up and into the house through a pipe. Some well owners may have an aboveground pump. If there is no groundwater available to enter the pump, it sucks air instead of water. When the tap is turned on, nothing comes out. In most cases, this is caused by the underground water table dropping below the level of the well pump or the well going dry.

Signs of Trouble

Look for signs that your well is under stress. Tap water may look muddy or murky or the taste might change. You may notice sediment in the water. Spigots might cough and sputter as air comes through the line instead of water. The submersible pump may be pumping nothing but air. An aboveground pump may overheat. All can be signs of dangerously low water levels.

There could also be a simple solution. Perhaps the household electricity is off, or a fuse has blown cutting power to the pump and pressure tank needed to operate your well. The pressure tank or wiring to the pump may have also failed.

The only sure way to tell if the well has run dry is to measure the water level in the well. This can be a complicated task. Contact your licensed well contractor and review the [wellcare®](#) information sheets [Coping with Low Water Levels](#) and [Determining Static Water Level in a Well](#).

Options to Replacing Your Well

First, check if the well is reaching the end of its lifespan. The life of a well is estimated at 20-30 years, or longer, depending on the quality of materials used during construction.

Deepening a well so that it reaches further below the water table may help to ensure a more drought-resistant water supply. However, deepening a well is never a guarantee that you will get more water and it can be as expensive as drilling a new deep well. Perhaps there is an easier fix like lowering the well pump. If there is room, the pump be placed deeper into the well's borehole.

Redeveloping an existing well may make it more efficient. There are options like hydrofracturing, high pressure jetting, and well surging that may increase water flow.

IMPORTANT!

**DO NOT POUR WATER
DOWN YOUR WELL**

This could damage the well's borehole, the pump, and contaminate your drinking water.

Once you are sure the well is out of water ask your licensed well contractor about these options to reach water within your existing well. **Do not** hire a tanker truck to pour water into your well. This could damage the well's borehole, the pump, and contaminate your drinking water. Also remember to test your well water after any deepening, maintenance, repairs, or other procedures to ensure it is safe.

Replacing Your Well

A new, deep, and modern well may be the only option to ensure a safe and steady water supply after your current well runs dry. This is an opportunity to work with your licensed well contractor to address the location of the well on your property, the well size and storage capacity, water pressure, and any other issues.

After the new well is installed, your old well must be sealed to protect the quality of your groundwater supply and prevent any hazard. Review the wellcare® information sheet [Closing an Abandoned Well](#).

For More Information on What to Do If Your Well Runs Dry

If you have any questions or concerns about your well or well water, contact your licensed well contractor, local environmental health department, or the [wellcare® Hotline at 888-395-1033](tel:888-395-1033).



Information to help maintain and protect your water well system:

[wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) is a program of the [Water Systems Council \(WSC\)](https://www.watersystemscouncil.org). WSC is the only national organization solely focused on protecting the health and water supply of more than 13 million households nationwide who depend on private wells.

This publication is one of more than 100 [wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) information sheets available FREE at www.watersystemscouncil.org.

Well owners and others with questions about wells and well water can contact the [wellcare® Hotline at 1-888-395-1033](tel:1-888-395-1033) or visit www.wellcarehotline.org to fill out a contact form or chat with us live!

JOIN THE WELLCARE® WELL OWNERS NETWORK!

By joining the FREE [wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) Well Owners Network, you will receive regular information on how to maintain your well and protect your well water.

Contact us at 1-888-395-1033 or visit www.wellcarehotline.org to join!