Why Test Your Well Water for Color?

What is a color test for water?

Your water should be clear and colorless. If your drinking water has a color, it can indicate that there may be:
- Dissolved organic material
- Inadequate treatment or treatment by-products
- Inorganic materials, such as iron or manganese.

Are there any potential health effects of color?

Color itself is not a health problem. However, there may be a health concern depending on what is causing the color. Most of the time discolored water will only cause nuisance problems like staining of laundry or plumbing fixtures.

What is the standard for color in drinking water?

The Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level, as set by the Environmental Protection Agency is 15 color units. At 15 color units, people will notice discolored water.

Test your well water for color:

- Every year
- Anytime you notice a change in the color of your water
- Have your well water tested at a certified laboratory

If my water is discolored, how do I treat it?

Treating for color will depend on what is causing the water’s discoloration. Refer to your lab results and contact URI Cooperative Extension at 401-874-5398 with questions about which treatment system you should use.