



Clinton County Health Department

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

"Working Together for a Healthier Community"

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Clinton County Health Department Press Release "Disinfecting Water for Home Use and Private Wells" April 29, 2011

Due to recent flooding and standing ground water all private well users should suspect that their private water supply may be infected. Any water well that has been flooded should be disinfected before using it for washing, drinking or cooking. Even if your well is operational, you should disinfect your water until it is tested and found suitable for drinking. Changes in the water's appearance, taste or odor may indicate possible contamination.

Steps for Disinfecting Water for Home Use: If your well was impacted by flooding, you can disinfect the water to make it safe for drinking and cooking purposes. Here are three different ways you can do this:

Disinfection by Boiling (Note: Disinfection by boiling produces the safest water)

- Bring water to a rolling boil, and keep a full boil for at least a minute.
- Let the water cool before drinking.
- Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back in it by pouring it back and forth between two containers. This will improve the taste of stored water.

Using Liquid Chlorine Bleach

- Disinfect water by adding eight drops of liquid chlorine bleach (4-6% available chlorine) per gallon of water (up to 16 drops if water is cloudy).
- Stir, and let stand for 30 minutes.
- If the water does not taste and smell of chlorine at that point, add another dose of bleach and let stand another 15 minutes.

Using Iodine or Chlorine Tablets

- Check the expiration date for the tablets before using.
- Follow the package directions.
- Usually one tablet is enough for one quart of water.
- Double the dose if the water is cloudy.

Steps for Disinfecting a Well: Here is a step by step method to sanitize a contaminated well before restoring it to full use:

1. Attach a hose to your outdoor faucet that is closest to the well or pressure tank. Run water through the hose until it is clear.

2. Mix two quarts household bleach containing about 5% chlorine in 10 gallons of water in a large bucket or pail in the area of the well casing.
3. Turn electric power off to the well pump. Carefully remove the well cap and well seal if necessary. Set aside.
4. Place hose connect to outdoor faucet inside the well casing. Turn electrical power back on to the well pump and turn water on to run the pump.
5. Pour the water and bleach mixture carefully from the bucket or pail down the open well casing. At the same time, continue to run the water from the hose placed inside the well casing.
6. Run the water at each indoor and outdoor faucet, until a chlorine odor is present, and then shut each faucet off.
7. Continue running water through the hose, down inside the well casing to recirculate the chlorine treated water. Use the hose to also wash down the inside of the well casing.
8. Shut all faucets off to stop the pump after one hour of recirculating. Disconnect power supply to pump. Remove recirculator hose from well.
9. Mix two more quarts of bleach in 10 gallons of water and pour mixture down the well casing. Disinfect the well cap and seal by rinsing with a chlorine solution. Replace well seal and cap. Allow the well to stand idle for at least eight hours and preferably 12 -24 hours. Avoid using the water during this time.
10. Flush the chlorinated water out of the well after the well has been idle for the recommended period of time. Turn the pump on and run the water using an outdoor faucet and garden hose in an area away from grass and shrubs until the odor of chlorine disappears. Run all indoor and outdoor faucets until the odor and taste of chlorine disappears.

Homeowners will still need to have their well water sampled to confirm that the disinfecting process was successful. The testing should be done by a certified laboratory. For additional information about the flooding and private well water please contact the Clinton County health Department Environmental Health Unit at 565-4870 or visit us on the web at www.clintonhealth.org.

Endorsed by: _____
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