

Health Unit Media Release



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CLEAN UP FLOODED WELLS BEFORE USING For Immediate Release

Heavy rainfall and melting snow has resulted in flooding on many properties. If your property has been flooded, organisms carried in floodwater that could make your family sick may contaminate your well. If your well is submerged during a flood, bacteria, viruses, or parasites can enter the top of your well, or seep down along the casing, making your drinking water unsafe. Even if water from a flooded well looks clear, it cannot be regarded as safe for consumption until the well and plumbing system has been disinfected, flushed and a water test shows that it does not contain harmful bacteria. **Water testing bottles and instructions are available through your local health unit office.**

You should use bottled water for drinking and food preparation until your well water is safe for consumption. If you must use your well water, make sure that all well components are in good condition and that the electrical system is dry. Bring well water for drinking and food preparation to a rolling boil for at least one minute before use.

Follow the well disinfection procedure below if you are concerned that your well has been contaminated during a flood. The tools you will need are 5% (hypochlorite) household bleach, a funnel, goggles, rubber gloves, old clothes and a garden hose. For a dug well, three feet (91 cm) in diameter use 1.1 litres (1 quart) of bleach for every five feet (1.5 m) water depth. For a drilled well, six inches (15 cm) diameter, use five ounces (150 ml) of bleach for every 25 feet (7.5 m) of water depth.

- Mix bleach with water and pour directly into well
- Drain water heater and remove or bypass any carbon filter
- Open all taps one at a time and let water run
- Turn off taps when a bleach odour is noticed and let stand 12 hours
- Drain the water system to remove all chlorinated water. Avoid draining this water into the septic tank – use a garden hose
- Resample 48 hours later and take the sample immediately to your nearest health unit office. If satisfactory, take two more samples, each one-week apart to ensure water remains satisfactory.

For more information, please contact the Health Protection Department of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit in Brockville at 345-5685 or Smiths Falls at 283-2740, or our Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853.

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