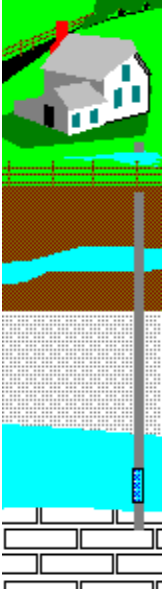


Barry-Eaton District Health Department - FAQ Sheet #1

- Frequently Asked Questions -

What Should I Do if My Well is Flooded?



Why should I be concerned?

Surface waters are susceptible to many sources of contamination. This is particularly true during a flood event where sewage runoff and overflow from lakes, rivers, and streams may be carrying bacteria such as E. Coli and cholera, protozoa such as Giardia, and viruses such as hepatitis. If surface water enters your well, it may contaminate the water that you rely on for drinking, cooking, washing, and bathing.

What should I do to protect my family from contaminated well water?

If there is a flooding event in your area, your county health department may issue a precautionary boil water notice through your local television, radio, and newspapers. In general, if flood waters have reached your well, or if you notice any change in the appearance or taste of your water, or even if you are unsure about the impact of flooding on the water quality in your area, you should boil all of the water you use for drinking, making beverages, cooking, brushing your teeth, washing dishes, and washing areas of the skin that have been cut or injured. The water should be brought to a rolling boil for at least one minute and then cooled as necessary. Bottled water may also be used for all of these purposes.

Is my water safe to drink after the flooding subsides?

No -- If your well has been flooded, you must disinfect it and contact your county health department for information on how to sample your water and where to take the sample for bacteriological testing.

How do I disinfect my well?

If you have a 5" PVC well casing, the following steps may be performed by the homeowner to disinfect the well. (If you do not have a 5" PVC well casing, a well driller should be contacted to disinfect the well.)

- If the water is discolored, turn on a garden hose and run until the water is clear.
- Add 1 quart of unscented household bleach to 5 gallons of water.
- Remove the well cap and carefully move the wiring bundle to the side.
- Pour the chlorine solution into the well.
- Place a garden hose into the well and rinse down the casing and internal parts for 10 to 15 minutes. Replace the well cap.
- Inside the house, turn on each water tap until you smell chlorine.
- Turn off each tap and allow to sit for a minimum of 8 hours (overnight, if possible).
- To flush the system, turn on a garden hose and direct away from the well & septic system. Allow to run for 5 - 6 hours.
- After flushing, turn on each tap inside the house and run the water until there is no chlorine odor.
- Collect a bacteriological water sample 2 – 3 days after chlorinating.

Is it safe now?

The only way to verify that the water is safe to drink is to have it tested. Although chlorine bleach is effective against microorganisms, it will not remove chemical contamination that may have entered your well.

For further information, contact your local health department at:

Barry-Eaton District Health Department
Environmental Health Division

BARRY COUNTY
(269) 945-9516, ext. 5

EATON COUNTY
(517) 541-2615