

Flood Related - Wells

The Green Lake County Health Unit would like to remind the resident's of Green Lake County the importance of disinfecting their well after a flood. Resident's should adhere to the following guidelines.

What should I do if my well has been contaminated by flood?

If your well has been contaminated by high water due to flood you need to take preventative measures to ensure that you do not consume water that is unsafe for drinking. Wells that are capped at less than 12" above grade are especially vulnerable to rising flood waters. If the surface of the water has risen above the height of your well cap you should have the water tested.

The well cap and casing must be completely watertight to prevent infiltration. A loose cap or cracks in the casing can allow surface water to enter which may contain harmful bacteria often found in surface water from flooding.

Do not rely on taste, odor or appearance to decide if your water supply is free of bacteria. A laboratory test is necessary to confirm the presence or absence of coliform bacteria. If coliform bacteria are present then it is possible that disease-causing organisms associated with surface water run-off that cause enteric disease disorders may be present.

While waiting for your test result, obtain an alternate source of water that is known to be safe to drink such as commercial bottled water or water from any public or private well that you have permission to use that has not been contaminated and has a documented history of producing water that is free of bacteria as proven by testing from a certified water testing laboratory.

Or you may boil your own water at a rolling boil for three minutes to disinfect it. Do not use your water for ice unless it has been disinfected first.

Once the flooded water level has resided, have your well chlorinated and collect a water sample to send to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene or a private state-certified lab to be tested for bacteria. You may also wish to have it tested for nitrates that are known to be toxic to infants less than 6 months of age at concentration levels above 10 mg/L. It is recommended to have your well tested on an annual basis.

For further information please contact the Green Lake County Health Unit at 920-294-4070 or 1-800-664-3588.