

Disinfecting Private Water Supplies After Flooding

Avoid drinking untreated well water that have become flooded, or if contamination is suspected. Private wells that have been affected by flooding or heavy rains must be disinfected and tested after flood waters recede before they are considered safe for using.

If you suspect or have been advised that your water is unsafe, use bottled, boiled, or distilled water for drinking, cooking, preparing any food, washing your hands, bathing, or brushing your teeth.

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE MY PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY SAFE?

There are several treatment options to temporarily treat your water supply until the well can be disinfected and tested. If your water supply has been contaminated by chemicals or you suspect chemical contamination, please note that the following disinfection methods may not make the water safe to drink. You must get water from another safe source, such as bottled water.

Boiling:

1. Place water in a clean cooking container. If the water is cloudy, strain it using a coffee filter.
2. Bring the water to a **rolling boil** for at least **one minute**.
3. Prepare the water ahead of time, and cool in the refrigerator overnight.

Chlorination:

- For **clear water** add **two drops** of **unscented 5.25%** household bleach to **one litre** of water. **Mix thoroughly**, and let stand for **30 minutes**. If there is a slight chlorine smell, and the water looks clear, the water is safe to drink.
- For **cloudy water** add **four drops** of unscented **5.25%** household bleach to **one litre** of water. **Mix thoroughly**, and let stand for **30 minutes**. If there is no chlorine smell, add **four more drops** of bleach, and let stand for another **30 minutes**.
- Water purification tablets can also be purchased from most outdoor supply stores or camping stores. Follow manufacturer's instructions.

Iodine Crystals:

These crystals are available from outdoor supply stores or camping stores. Iodine use is recommended for no more than three weeks per season because of potential thyroid problems or iodine sensitivity.

1. Place **four to eight grams** of elemental iodine crystals in a 30 ml (one ounce) clear glass bottle. Fill the bottle with water, shake, and let them settle.
2. Add **15 ml** (three teaspoons) of the iodine solution from the bottle to **one litre** of water that is already in another storage container. Solid crystals remaining in the clear glass bottle must not be transferred to the water in the storage container.
3. Let the water stand for **15 minutes**.
4. As long as there are iodine crystals remaining in the clear glass bottle, the procedure can be repeated.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

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