



Renfrew County and
District Health Unit

FACT SHEET

Caring for your water well during and after a flood



Water wells can be contaminated by flooding. While this contamination may involve an unpleasant taste, odour, or cloudiness of the well water, some contamination can only be recognized after water quality testing.

Under flood conditions surface water may enter directly into the water source via the well itself, an old abandoned well, or some other nearby excavation, bypassing the natural filtering process. Testing and recovery efforts should be focused on possible bacterial contamination.

While the majority of water wells are likely unaffected, each homeowner should take certain steps to ensure their well water is safe to use for

drinking, cooking and/or bathing. As a first step, water from all wells in the flooded area should be tested for quality. In order to do this, you should obtain a water sample bottle from Renfrew County and District Health Unit.

Until the testing shows your well water to be safe, all water for drinking cooking and bathing should be boiled. Bringing water to a rolling boil for 1 minute will kill most organisms. If you suspect or are informed that the water is contaminated with chemicals, seek another source of water immediately, such as bottled water.

If water testing indicates that your water well has some level of contamination, then the well should be chlorinated and retested. Chlorination is a procedure used to disinfect a water well contaminated with bacteria. Contact Renfrew County and District Health Unit for further information regarding the method of disinfecting a well.

If your well was unaffected by flood water, you should collect water samples at least 3 times per year. Not all water wells will have flood-related contamination. Some water wells may have had problems prior to flooding and have been recognized. Also, it is unlikely that all water wells with contamination will be cleaned after a single treatment. Once a well has been chlorinated, it should be tested and only after a good sample can it be used for drinking, cooking and/or bathing.

Further information can be obtained by contacting a public health inspector with the Renfrew County and District Health Unit at 613-735-8654, extension 555 or visit www.rcdhu.com.



Visit us at www.rcdhu.com or call 613-735-8654
or 1-800-267-1097, Ext. 555

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"