


Fixing Your Flooded Well

Flood waters can affect private wells.

During flooding events, bacteria and other hazards from the floodwater can get into private wells. If flood waters have covered the top of your well cap (cover), surrounded your well casing (piping material), or nearby wells have been flooded, you should follow the steps in this guide.

Follow these steps if your well is flooded.


 **Use a different water source** for drinking, rinsing fruits and vegetables, brushing teeth, and bathing babies until your well water is tested and found to be free of bacteria.

Options for different water include:


 Water boiled for one minute  Bottled water  Water from a well without issues  Water from a public system


You will need to use this water source for several weeks as it will take some time before the water is safe to use again.


 **Throw out ice and drinks made with the water.**

 **Wash dishes carefully.** Use your dishwasher's heated dry or sanitize cycle or wash by hand.*


 **Be careful while bathing.** Make sure kids do not swallow the water.

 **Wait until the well is no longer in contact with water.**
This could take days to weeks.

 **Disinfect the well.** DHS recommends that well users work with a [licensed professional](#) to disinfect their well.*

 **Wait until the disinfection to work.**
This will take a week.

 **Test the well water for bacteria.** Contact your [local health department](#) for more information on available testing resources.*

 **Wait for the test results.**
This could take days to weeks.

* = Additional information is available in the *Resource Guide* (next page).





Evaluate the test results.

If bacteria are absent, the well water is safe to start using again for all purposes.

If bacteria are still present, continue to use a different water source for drinking, rinsing fruits and vegetables, brushing teeth, and bathing babies.

Talk to your health care provider if you or a family member have symptoms that may be related to your water.

Follow these additional steps if any bacteria are present.



Collect a second sample to verify the results.



Wait for the test results.

This could take days to weeks.



Take further actions if bacteria are still present. Have your well inspected by a [licensed well driller or pump installer](#). You may need to disinfect again or make repairs to your well or plumbing.

★ Resource Guide ★



Find contact information for your health department at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties/index.htm.



Follow the instructions in our *Cleaning with Bleach* guide to **sanitize dishes**: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p00631d.pdf



The DNR has a list of **licensed well professionals** at dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Wells/contacts.html.



You should also test for arsenic, bacteria, and nitrate regularly. You can find information on these and other substances to consider testing for at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/private.htm.

You can find all this information and more at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/flood/water.htm.

Questions? Concerns?

Contact us at
DHSEnvHealth@wi.gov
or 608-266-1120.