
ARSENIC IN KEYES LAKE PRIVATE WELLS

FLORENCE COUNTY

30-Day Public Comment Period on Report by Department of Health Services

Past testing of private wells in Florence and Marinette Counties found that many contain water with elevated and potentially harmful levels of naturally-occurring arsenic. In July 2009, the Florence County Health Department (FCHD) asked the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to test for arsenic in private wells around Keyes Lake. DHS has completed a report of its findings, which is available on the DHS website at <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P0/P00351.pdf>.

Important information for residents of Keyes Lake:

- About 25% of private wells around Keyes Lake have unsafe levels of naturally-occurring arsenic.
- Drinking water with elevated arsenic levels over many years increases the risk for certain cancers (skin, liver, kidney, bladder, and lung), but the levels detected in the Keyes Lake area are not likely to cause other non-cancer health problems.
- Water from private wells around Keyes Lake with elevated arsenic levels is safe for other household uses (showering, bathing, washing clothes, washing dishes, etc.).
- DHS and FCHD recommend arsenic testing for all private wells in the Keyes Lake area. Information on well testing for arsenic is available at http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/lc/PW/PW_Testing.htm

What should you do if your well has an elevated arsenic level?

- Stop drinking your water and use store-bought, bottled water as a short-term solution.
- If you have health concerns about arsenic in your well, talk about the test results with your physician.
- Consider long-term drinking water solutions, which include: altering the depth of an existing well, drilling a new well, or installing a water purification system.
- Conduct a follow-up water test to make sure the long-term solution is working and arsenic levels are below 0.01 mg/L.

For more information:

Arsenic in well water:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/arsenic/index.htm>

Health effects of arsenic and options for obtaining safe drinking water:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/Water/ArFS/Arsenic.pdf>

Or call:

Florence County Health Department: (715) 528-4837

Northeast Region Headquarters (Green Bay): (920) 662-5100

Wisconsin DHS (Madison): (608) 266-1120



(P-00359, 7/2012)