

Fixing Your Flooded Well

Well is flooded

You will need a safe source of water for several weeks while you fix your well.

When your well has been flooded, bacteria and other harmful organisms can get into your water. It will take time for the water to be safe to use again.

1

Use safe water for drinking, food preparation, and personal hygiene.

Use safe water for drinking, preparing food, brushing teeth, bathing, showering, and washing hands until your well water is tested and found to be free of bacteria. Do not use water or ice from your refrigerator or other appliances. Safe water includes bottled water, tap water that you boiled for one minute, or water from a well that was not flooded.



Wait until the well is no longer in contact with water.

This could take days to weeks.

Disinfect the well.

We recommend that you have your well disinfected by a [licensed well driller or pump installer](#). If you are unable to hire a professional, you can disinfect your own well using the steps in this [DNR publication](#) (page 4). Pay close attention to all steps as this work may pose chemical or electrical hazards.

2



Wait for disinfection to work.

This will take a week.

3

Test for total coliform and *E. coli* bacteria.

You can get a free flood test kit from your [local health department](#). Be sure to use the proper [sampling procedure](#) to avoid accidental contamination.



Wait for the test results.

This could take days to weeks.

Learn if the water is safe to use.

If the test results show that bacteria are absent, the water is safe to use for drinking, preparing food, and personal hygiene.

However, if bacteria are present, the water is not yet safe to use.

4

Learn what to do if your well has bacteria on the next page.

Bacteria present

If your test results show that you have bacteria in your well, you should follow these additional steps to make sure the water is safe before using it for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene.

5

Continue to use safe water.

If total coliform are present AND *E. coli* are present:

Do not use the water for drinking, preparing food, brushing teeth, bathing, showering, and washing hands.

If total coliform are present, but *E. coli* are absent:

Do not use the water for drinking, preparing food, and brushing teeth. You can use the water for bathing, showering, and washing hands.

Talk to your doctor if you have specific health concerns or if you or a family member have diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, cramps, or fever that you believe is related to your well.

Have a confirmation sample tested for bacteria.

Collect another water sample and have it analyzed to confirm the results. Be sure to use the proper [sampling procedure](#).

6



Wait for the test results.

This could take days to weeks.

Take further actions if bacteria are still present.

You should 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.

7

Resources

- To find information about licensed well drillers and pump installers, disinfection, local health departments, and sampling procedures, visit: dhs.wisconsin.gov/flood/water.htm.
- To learn more about other common health concerns for private well owners, visit dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/hazards.htm.

