



DISINFECTION OF CONTAMINATED WELLS

Bacterial contamination of wells usually occurs when foreign material is accidentally introduced through the top of the well. Properly constructed wells can usually be decontaminated by a one-time disinfection of the well. Contaminants enter wells when: sanitary seals allow surface water to enter through the top of the well, an insect or other small animal enters through an unscreened or missing vent pipe, a well pump has been replaced, or piping or pump motors have been laid on the ground surface.

Very seldom is the contaminant a permanent problem.

Follow these steps to disinfect your well:

1. Use any common household liquid bleach (Purex, Clorox etc.) Use $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of bleach. Larger doses are not normally harmful, but are not necessary to adequately disinfect most household wells.
2. Dilute the bleach with water in a three to five gallon plastic container and funnel into the well. The vent or $\frac{1}{2}$ " plug, located on the top of the well, can be removed for this purpose. Circulate this mixture into the well by attaching a garden hose to a nearby tap and opening and closing a hose nozzle placed over the opening where the bleach solution was funneled into the well. Alternate between full open nozzle and a partially closed one to direct a cone of spray to wash down the inside of the well casing. This will allow a thorough mixing of the bleach solution in the well and also assure that the sides of the casing are sprayed with the disinfectant. This process should be continued for about 30 minutes.
3. Open each faucet in the house and let the water flow until you can smell the bleach water mixture. Shut off each faucet as this smell becomes evident.
4. Do not allow usage of the well for at least 24 hours. This will allow the bleach to disinfect the well, pressure tank and all of the water piping of the system.
5. Now, pump out the bleach water by opening several taps and letting the water flow freely. It will take about one (1) hour of steady pumping to clear the well of the bleach. Normal water usage can resume when you can no longer detect a bleach odor.
6. Repeat the pumping procedure described in step 5 the following day to assure thorough removal of the bleach solution.
7. The well should be used in a normal manner for at least three (3) days following this disinfection before another water sample is taken for testing.

NOTE: Sometimes it is necessary to disinfect a second time in order to remove the contamination.

CAUTION: Until you have a satisfactory water sample, heat all water to a rolling boil for at least one (1) minute before drinking. Bottled water from an approved source is another option.

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