



Well-Meaning Advice For Private Well-Owners

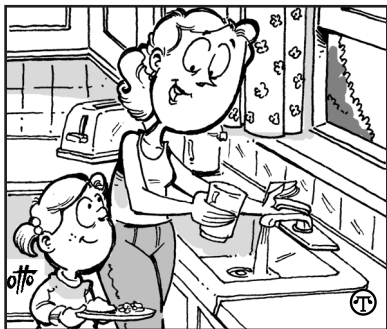
(NAPSA)—Is your home one of the 12 million American households that draws its water from a private well? If so, you should know that private wells are not subject to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards and regulations. It's up to you to protect and maintain your well to ensure the quality of your family's drinking water.

Proper well maintenance includes periodically monitoring well water and disinfecting the well whenever necessary. Disinfection is a chemical process used to control disease-causing microorganisms. Private wells are commonly disinfected using chlorine-based processes. Disinfecting your well is especially important if your property has been flooded.

Flood conditions can make well water vulnerable to microbial contamination, especially if the well-head—the part of the well above the ground surface—becomes submerged. This allows dirty water to flow into the well. Under normal circumstances, rainwater and melted snow trickle gradually into the ground through the tiny spaces between grains of sediment. This action results in the natural filtration of groundwater. During periods of flooding, however, natural filtration is bypassed and wells can become contaminated rapidly. Shallow wells are at greater risk for contamination than deep wells during floods.

According to the EPA, wells that are more than 10 years old or less than 50 feet deep are likely to be contaminated following a flood, even if there is no apparent damage.

The Water Quality & Health Council, an independent health advisory group sponsored by the



Be sure your well water doesn't make your family ill.

Chlorine Chemistry Council®, has compiled detailed instructions for disinfecting private wells with easy-to-use and readily available chlorine disinfectants. The instructions are on-line at www.waterandhealth.org/wells.

Some useful tips for private well owners include the following:

- Private well water should be tested at least once a year AND after significant flooding.
- Water should be analyzed by a qualified laboratory and include a bacterial analysis.
- According to the National Ground Water Association (NGWA), you can expect costs for commercial testing to be in the \$50 to \$150 range, depending on the number of analyses requested. Some county health departments may offer lower cost testing.
- Private well users can “do-it-yourself” with home test kits. NGWA recommends test kits that are simple to use with no mail-in requirements.

Good health starts with a clean water supply. And in some cases, it all starts at home. If you're a private well owner, get the facts and play an active role in the health of your family.