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To: All Media

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For Immediate Release

Well Water Test Kits Available for Wells Exposed to Flood Waters

With recent flooding of land and fields in Central Illinois, many private water wells may have been exposed to flood waters which can pose a public health hazard. Flood waters carry contaminants such as parasites, bacteria, and viruses from backed up septic systems and other sources. All wells that have been exposed to flood waters should be tested prior to use to help ensure the water is safe to drink.

Local public health departments in the tri-county area are providing water well test kits and disinfection information free of charge to their county residents who have water wells that have been exposed to flood waters. Test kits and information are available at these locations for their county residents from 8am-4pm, Monday-Friday:

- Peoria City/County Health Department, 2116 N. Sheridan Rd., Peoria
- Tazewell County Health Department, 21306 IL Route 9, Tremont
- Spring Bay Fire Department, 1075 Spring Bay Rd., East Peoria or Woodford County Health Department, 1831 S. Main St., Eureka

Local health departments urge residents to clean and test water wells after area flooding. Water wells should be disinfected using standard procedures which are listed on their websites. Once the water recedes from around water wells, it is important that flooded water wells be thoroughly pumped, allowed to recharge naturally, and disinfected before sampling. This process is necessary for complete disinfection of the well and may take up to several days to complete.

The water well kits test for coliform bacteria and E. coli. The test kit is free and includes information to return for lab testing. After the kits are tested and analyzed, the lab will send the results to the local health department to be interpreted.

(More)

Peoria City/County Health Department, www.pcchd.org
Tazewell County Health Department, www.tazewellhealth.org
Woodford County Health Department, www.woodfordhealth.org

The health department will notify the homeowner of the final test results, usually within 7-10 business days.

After flooding occurs, it is also recommended to have the total water well system checked by a qualified electrician, well contractor, or pump contractor. A check of the well system by a qualified water well contractor may include:

- A flow test to determine system output, a check of the water level before and during pumping, pump motor performance (amp load, grounding, and line voltage), pressure tank and pressure switch contact, and general water quality (odor and cloudiness);
- A well equipment inspection to assure it is sanitary and meets local code;
- A water test for coliform bacteria and nitrates, and other items that may be of local concern; and
- Other typical tests for iron, manganese, water hardness, sulfides, and other water constituents that cause problems with plumbing, staining, water appearance, and odor.

Additional recommendations include:

- Keep hazardous chemicals, such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides, and motor oil far away from wells, and maintain a "clean" zone of at least 50 feet between the well and any kennels or livestock operations.
- Maintain proper separation between water wells and buildings, waste systems, and chemical storage areas.
- Periodically check the well cover or well cap on top of the well casing to ensure it is in good repair and securely attached. The seal should keep out insects and rodents.
- Keep well records in a safe place. These records include the construction report, annual water well system maintenance, and water testing results.

For more information regarding water wells, as well as fees or services regarding additional nitrate testing, contact your local health department's Environmental Health Program or visit their website:

- Peoria City/County Health Department 309-679-6161, www.pcchd.org
- Tazewell County Health Department 309-929-0272, www.tazewellhealth.org
- Woodford County Health Department 309-467-3064, www.woodfordhealth.org

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