

DISINFECTION/SHOCK CHLORINATION OF PRIVATE WATER WELLS

Prior to having your water well sampled for bacteriological quality, or as part of routine maintenance of the well or if a previous water sample is unacceptable for drinking purposes, it is recommended that the private water system owner have the following disinfection procedure completed:

1. Obtain two gallons of unscented laundry bleach (5.25% Sodium Hypochlorite) and mix it into 10 gallons of water. Do not use chlorine tablets or pool chlorine. Household laundry bleach is readily available at the local grocery.
2. Turn off the power to the well pump. Remove the cap from the well and pour the diluted chlorine solution into the well. Try to wash down the interior of the upper well casing as you pour the chlorine solution into the well. (If your well cap is not exposed, contact this office for instructions).
3. Add 1 Quart of White Vinegar to 5 gallons of water and dump this solution into the well. Using your garden hose, re-circulate the chlorine solution back into the well, again attempting to wash down the interior sides of the well casing for approximately 10 minutes.
4. Turn on all hot and cold faucets inside and outside the house, one or two at a time, and run them until you smell the chlorine solution coming through the tap. Flush the toilets. Make sure you do not bypass the water softener or the hot water heater as all aspects of the water system need to be disinfected. Remove and dispose of any carbon filters you may have on the system and thoroughly clean the inside of the filter housing. Do not replace the carbon filter until an acceptable bacteriological sample is obtained.
5. Once you smell the chlorine solution coming through each of the individual faucets, shut the faucet off and let the chlorine solution sit in the plumbing for at least 12 hours. If the well is new or if the well has not been disinfected within the previous year, you might want to let the chlorine solution sit in the plumbing for 24 hours.
6. After the 12-24 hour disinfection period, begin to flush the chlorine solution first through a garden hose away from the sewage system (if applicable) and then run the individual hot and cold faucets until you no longer smell chlorine. You will not want to run all of the faucets at the same time, nor for any length of time as we do not want to run the well dry. Flush one or two faucets for 15-30 minutes then shut the water off and let the well recover for 15-30 minutes. Flush all faucets as the goal is to eliminate the chlorine solution from the system before sampling.
7. Approximately 48 hours after the chlorine has been flushed completely from the system you will be ready to have your water sampled for bacteriological quality. The Warren County Combined Health District collects water samples several times a week. Please contact our office at 513-695-1220 to schedule an appointment for the water sample to be collected.

NOTE: If the homeowner is not comfortable completing the above procedure, please contact a private water system contractor or the Ohio Department of Health-Private Water Program website.