

Disinfecting the Well and Water System

Private wells can become contaminated in a number of different ways (flooding, insects, soil entry, etc.). When this occurs the well and water system will need to be disinfected.

Once an inspection has determined that your water system is free from any sources of apparent contamination, you should disinfect the well. Although there are many ways to properly disinfect a well, the following technique has proven to be effective in most cases:

- Mix one gallon of household laundry bleach with 100 gallons of water. If your well is more than 150 feet deep, mix two gallons of bleach with 200 gallons of water. If you do not have a container for mixing the solution all at once, you can mix 25 gallons at a time in a clean plastic garbage can.
- Remove the cap from the well and pour the entire bleach and water solution into the well.
- Rinse down the sides of well casing with a garden hose for 5 to 10 minutes. The rinse water should be from a hose bib on the water system being disinfected. This procedure circulates the bleach through the water system to insure better disinfection.
- If you wish to disinfect your plumbing system, turn on all cold water taps until you smell the bleach. Then turn the taps off. Hot water lines don't need disinfection.
- Let the bleach remain in the system for at least eight hours and preferably 24 hours.
- Pump all of the bleach out of the water system by running the water through a garden hose to an area where the bleach will not damage lawns, shrubs or septic systems. Pump until you can no longer smell the bleach.
- Two or three days after disinfection, a sample from the well should be submitted for bacteriological analysis.