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FREE WELL WATER TESTING FOR BAY COUNTY RESIDENTS STARTS MONDAY



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Panama City, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Bay County is providing free water testing for private well owners. Testing kits can be picked up at DOH-Bay's office at 597 W. 11th St. starting Friday. Hours are 9 am – 4 pm. Samples must be returned to DOH-Bay within 24 hours after sampling. Samples taken on Wednesday must be brought to the DOH-Bay office by noon Thursday. No samples will be accepted on Fridays. Testing fees are being waived until further notice.

The following precautions should be followed by residents with private drinking wells that were affected by flooding and/or damage to the well or distribution system in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. If your well was covered by storm water, you will need to follow these tips and get a testing kit. If you are unaware of the status of your well, you will want to take these precautions as well. This will help prevent disease-causing organisms that may make their water unsafe to drink.

One of the following methods is recommended as a precaution:

- Use bottled water, especially for mixing baby formula; or
- Boil water before use, holding it at rolling boil for at least one minute before using it for drinking, washing, cooking, etc.; or
- Disinfect water by adding 8 drops (about 1/8 tsp – this would form a puddle about the size of a dime) of plain unscented household bleach (4 to 6%) per gallon of water, and then let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy after 30 minutes, repeat the procedure. Use a container that has a cap or cover for disinfecting and storing water to be used for drinking. This will prevent contamination.

After the flooding subsides and any necessary repairs are made to the well or distribution system:

- Disinfect your well using the procedures available from the Florida Department of Health in Bay County or provided by the Florida Department of Health at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/healthy-environments/private-well-testing/index.html>; and
- Contact the Florida Department of Health in Bay County for private well sampling instructions or have your drinking well water sampled for coliform bacteria by a laboratory certified by the State of Florida to perform drinking water analysis.
- Continue to use bottled/boiled/disinfected water until lab tests confirm that it is safe.

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