

LENAWEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
1040 S WINTER STREET SUITE 2328
ADRIAN, MI 49221-3871

DISINFECTING A WELL

Do not drink or use this water for consumption until you have a safe (non-detect) bacteriological sample result. Any well may become bacteriologically contaminated. Usually contamination occurs during repairs on the well or other construction procedures. However, for reasons unknown, older wells become contaminated and require disinfecting. Disinfecting may be accomplished by the use of ordinary laundry bleach, 5.25° Sodium Hypochlorite or Calcium hypochlorite powder. For the average homewell, 3-5 gallons of bleach will be adequate.

The procedure for the entire operation is outlined below:

1. Check the well seal, and vent pipe to be certain of good, tight construction. Replace any worn or damaged parts. To prevent contamination, a well must be constructed properly and in good working condition.
2. Mix one (1) gallon of bleach with three (3) or four (4) gallons of water. The water drawn from the contaminated well is satisfactory. As the solution is poured into the casing, splash it to ensure the inside is washed. Check again to see that the vent and seal are in good order before closing the well. When using hypochlorite powder, it is best to follow the directions that come with the product purchased. Do not use the chlorinated water for skin contact until the disinfecting odor disappears and after flushing on the following morning.
3. Turn on each water faucet throughout the entire distribution system and allow the water to run until you smell the disinfecting agent at each tap.
4. Turn off taps and allow the solution to stand in the water lines for two (2) hours. Then run each tap for ten (10) seconds and close again and allow to stand overnight.
5. On the following morning:
 - If you have public sewers, run each tap until the disinfectant odor disappears.
 - If you have a septic system, connect a garden hose to an outside faucet and run the water into a road ditch until the disinfectant odor disappears.
6. After most of the water has been released in the above manner, again turn on each faucet to release the disinfectant residual in the immediate locality of the faucet.
7. Collect a water sample for bacteriological analysis, after all chlorine is out of the water distribution system. It is recommended that bottled water be used for consumption until a safe (non-detect) bacteriological sample is obtained.

DUG WELL: For dug wells, pump the water to waste until it is clear. Then estimate the amount of water in the well in gallons and add one (1) quart of any of the common laundry bleaches to each 50 gallon water in the well. Mix chlorine with the water in the well by stirring with a long stick. Allow at least two (2) hours contact and then pump the well to waste. Collect a water sample for bacteriological analysis, after all chlorine is out of the water distribution system.