

WELL WATER SAFETY AFTER HURRICANE MICHAEL

After a hurricane, is your well water safe to use?

If your private well or septic system was damaged during the storm, your well water may be contaminated with harmful bacteria. To avoid getting sick, make sure you boil or disinfect your water before using it for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, cleaning wounds, or cooking.

Boil water for at least 1 minute before use. If boiling isn't possible, disinfect water by adding 1/8th teaspoon or about 8 drops of unscented household bleach per gallon of water. Stir well and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water is still cloudy, repeat the procedure once.

You also can use bottled water until you know your well water is safe. Bottled water is recommended for preparing infant formula.

To determine if your well water is safe to use, you will need to have it tested for bacteria.

If you lost power during the storm but there was no damage to your well or septic system, the chances of well contamination are low. But, you should flush the well to pump the stagnant water out of your plumbing system before use.

Open every outdoor tap and indoor tap and let the water run for at least 15 minutes before use. This will flush the stagnant water out of your plumbing system.

Have your well water tested for bacteria as soon as you can.

For more disaster recovery tips, go to disaster.ifas.ufl.edu.