



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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#### **Test private well water and use caution when coming into contact with flood water**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Alabama Department of Public Health urges residents of flooded areas, especially persons living in areas where there may have been flash flooding, to test their water wells before consuming water from them.

Private wells that have been covered by flood water should be assumed to have been contaminated. Do not drink water from your well or feed it to your animals until you have tested it and received a satisfactory result.

Sample kits may be obtained from the local health departments and state health department laboratories which are equipped to sample well water for bacteriological contamination. Once a satisfactory sample is obtained, the well should be monitored by continued sampling to ensure the quality of the water supply.

Until water is known to be free of contaminants, residents should only use clear water which has been brought to a rolling boil for one minute.

Flooding also may result in contaminants from various sources being washed into streams, creeks, rivers and coastal waters. If flooding occurs, these waters may contain fecal material from overflowing sewage systems as well as other contaminants from a variety of sources.

Although skin contact with flood waters does not by itself pose a serious health risk, there is a risk of disease from eating or drinking anything contaminated by flood water. If one has open cuts or sores that will be exposed to flood water, keep them as clean as possible by washing

well with soap to control infection. If a wound develops redness, swelling or drainage, promptly seek medical attention.

In addition, any fish or seafood caught from these waters should be thoroughly cooked prior to consumption. After handling fish and seafood, persons are reminded to thoroughly wash their hands with soap and clean water.

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