



Free Drinking Well Test Kits for Flood-Impacted Residents of Carbon County

Through a cooperative effort between Carbon County Environmental Health and the financial support of the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation with the Carbon County Disaster Relief Fund, well water test kits are being offered for those whose drinking well water may have been contaminated by the widespread June flooding event.

Because of the extensive flood area, and the speed and direction of ground waterflow, a private well may not be a safe source of water for many months after the flood, even if the flood waters did not cover the well-head. The well can become contaminated with bacteria or other contaminants. Waste water from malfunctioning septic tanks or chemicals seeping into the ground can contaminate the ground water even after the water was tested and found to be safe. Therefore, it may be necessary to take long range precautions, including repeated testing, to protect the safety of drinking water. Swiftly moving flood water can carry large debris that could loosen well hardware, dislodge well construction materials or distort casing. Coarse sediment in the flood waters could erode pump components. If the well is not tightly capped, sediment and flood water could enter the well and contaminate it. Wells that are more than 10 years old or less than 50 feet deep are likely to be contaminated, even if there is no apparent damage. Floods may cause some wells to collapse.

Information on wells after a flood can be found at: <https://co.carbon.mt.us/departments/sanitarian/>

A limited number of free kits are available and we ask that the public be mindful of those most affected and in most need. Red Lodge Area Community Foundation has also volunteered its Carbon County Area Ride and Transit (CART) program to pick-up and deliver samples to Energy Labs in Billings from centralized locations throughout the County. Please call Lori Kane at Carbon County Environmental Health (406-446-1694) to coordinate testing of your well.

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