

DRINKING WATER WARNING

The Ephrata Water Department Water System, ID 23650A, located in Grant County is contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria.

E. coli bacteria were detected in a sample collected on 04/06/2010 from the City's distribution system and reported to the City on 04/07/10. These bacteria can make you sick and are a particular concern for people with compromised immune systems.

DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT BOILING IT FIRST. Bring all water to a rolling boil, for 1 minute, and let it cool before using. Boiled or purchased bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation until further notice. Boiling kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.

Fecal coliforms and E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems. The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice about drinking water from their health care provider.

What happened? What is the suspected or known source of contamination?

A routine coliform sample collected from the Oasis Park area of the City on April 6 was reported by the lab on April 7 to show the presence of *E. coli* bacteria. The state Department of Health (DOH) was consulted immediately, and three repeat samples were collected around Oasis Park on April 8. None of these repeat samples showed any coliform contamination. The City collected additional samples on April 8 from the two wells currently supplying the lower pressure zone, and from portions of the distribution system serving each of the City's pressure zones. As of noon April 9, the lab has reported that four of these samples show the presence of coliform bacteria, including one of the samples collected at Well #6. All four of these unsatisfactory samples were collected from the lower pressure zone. Well #6 is considered a possible source of contamination. The City turned the well off immediately upon notification from the lab.

The following is being done to correct the problem:

The City will be chlorinating the reservoirs and flushing chlorinated water throughout the lower pressure zone. After all the unchlorinated water is displaced by chlorinated water, the City will flush the chlorinated water out of the lower pressure zone and begin sampling the area for coliform bacteria.

In addition to boiling tap water before use, consumers are advised to discard all ice and beverages mixed with tap water, and to flush your taps until you smell chlorine, to be sure you have eliminated unchlorinated water from your plumbing system.

We have consulted with the Washington State Department of Health about this incident. We will notify you when you no longer need to boil the water. We anticipate resolving the problem by early next week, provided the post-chlorination coliform sampling results are all satisfactory.

For information:

Contact the City of Ephrata at (509) 754-4601 or at <http://www.ephrata.org/309.html>

Please share this notice with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is sent to you by the City of Ephrata on Friday 09 April 2010