
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UPDATE: Advisory Lifted for City of Rockford Water

ROCKFORD – Friday morning, the City of Rockford announced that two consecutive series of water tests detected no *E. coli* bacteria. The city used chlorine to flush out contaminants, so some water may still have a smell or taste of chlorine. City officials are recommending the following steps to resolve this:

1. Drain your water heater according to manufacturer's instructions. This process should take about ten minutes. If you are not sure how to do this, you may turn on the faucets in your home, allowing hot water to run for 10 minutes.
2. Turn on your garden hose for 15 minutes (this could be a good opportunity to water your garden or lawn).
3. Open faucets where you get drinking water or water to brush your teeth for a minute or two. KCHD recommends removing screens (aerators) from spigots when you do this.
4. If you use a water softener, it will require a recharge or regeneration. Systems should be flushed and sanitized as directed by the manufacturer (each unit may have different instructions). This can often be done by the homeowner. Simple sanitizing should cost less than \$5, but it will depend on the type of sanitizing needed. Conditioning units, such as reverse osmosis, could cost more.
5. Water filters can't remove *E.coli* from tap water. Replace water filters in refrigerators, pitchers, and/or on faucets, following manufacturer's instructions. If you have an ice maker or a refrigerator that makes ice, be sure to allow the line to flush by throwing out the first batch of ice it makes. Do not use any ice that was made during the advisory period.

Wednesday, testing by the city of Rockford indicated the presence of *E. coli*, after an equipment malfunction at the treatment plant over the holiday weekend. Moving forward, the Kent County Health Department recommends individuals who drank water between August 31 and September 3 monitor their health over the next 10 days.

Those with compromised immune systems, infants, women who are pregnant, and the elderly are at increased risk of illness from bacteria in drinking water. Symptoms of illness from *E. coli* exposure typically take 2-4 days to develop, but can take as many as eight days. Symptoms of gastrointestinal illness from *E.coli* include stomach cramps, diarrhea and/or vomiting. Some individuals could experience a low-grade fever as well. If you or a family member experience significant gastrointestinal issues, contact a health care provider.

The Kent County Health Department staff continues to work closely with licensed restaurants and food service facilities. They are being given special instructions on flushing/cleaning lines. Health department officials have been in contact with health care providers and other local health departments to make them aware of the situation, in case of suspected illness. So far, there have been no confirmed cases of illness related to the water.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.