



United States Air Force

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News Release

May 28, 2014

E. coli found in raw water supply; Water is safe to drink

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS – The JBSA-Fort Sam Houston public water system (PWS ID: TX0150116) had a raw ground water source sample(s) test positive for E. coli on Tuesday, May 27 2014. These bacteria can make you sick, and are a particular concern for infants, young children and people with weakened immune systems.

WHAT SHOULD I DO? WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

- Fecal indicators are microbes whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause short-term health 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 from their health care providers about drinking this water.

The two wells that indicated positive readings will be flushed and disinfected to ensure elimination of any and all possible bacteria within 24 hours.

Raw water is treated before it enters the distribution system and reaches point of use as tap water. This E. Coli was identified in the system prior to potable water disinfection. The samples tested after the water was disinfected did not indicate any fecal or E. Coli contamination.

Repeat samples of raw well water will be taken for further analysis to ensure the elimination of all bacteria. The system will be disinfected and flushed in accordance with the American Water Works Association (AWWA) standard and procedures provided by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Please share this information 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.

Again, raw water is treated before it enters the distribution system and reaches point of use as tap water. This E. Coli was identified in the system prior to potable water disinfection. The samples tested after the water was disinfected did not indicate any fecal or E. Coli contamination.

General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791. We anticipate resolving the problem within 48 hours. More information is available in the supplement below.



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
59TH MEDICAL WING (AETC)
JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO - LACKLAND TEXAS

MEMORANDUM FOR PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM CUSTOMER
May 27, 2014

FROM: 559 AMDS/SGPB

SUBJECT: Drinking Water Violation (Tier I - Fecal Coliform/E. coli)

1. Fecal coliform indicators/*E. coli* bacteria were found in the raw water supply at PWS Fort Sam Houston/PWS0150116 on 27 May 14. These bacteria can make you sick, and are a particular concern for people with weakened immune systems.
2. Bacterial contamination can occur when increased run-off enters the drinking water source (for example, following heavy rains). It can also happen due to a break in the distribution system (pipes) or a failure in the water treatment process.
3. What should I do? What does this mean?
 - a. **There is nothing that needs to be done at this time.** *E. coli* was identified in the system prior to disinfection. The samples downstream, post disinfection, did not indicate any bacterial contamination. We are taking corrective actions to mitigate the problem.
 - b. 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 diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, and people with severely compromised immune systems

c. 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 from their health care providers about drinking this water.

4. What is being done?

a. The system will be disinfected and flushed to ensure elimination of any and all possible bacteria within 24 hrs. Repeat samples will then be taken for further analysis and to validate the elimination of all bacteria. The system will be disinfected and flushed in accordance with the American Water Works Association (AWWA) standard and procedures provided by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

b. We will inform you when this issue is resolved. We anticipate resolving the problem within 48 Hours.

5. Additional information about drinking water can also be obtained at <http://water.epa.gov/drink/> or by contacting the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

6. Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly.

ERNEST L. SCOTT, Maj, USAF, BSC

Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight Commander