

DRINKING LAKE WATER

UNTREATED LAKE WATER IS NOT SAFE TO DRINK

- Many lake residents have wells, but many others depend on lake water and there continues to be a lot of dissent about whether lake water is safe to drink.
- Although the lake appears to be “pristine”, there is no way to tell whether the water contains bacteria, viruses and parasites only by looking.
- Health Canada recommends that we assume that all water is contaminated with disease causing organisms and must be disinfected before use.

SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION (BACTERIA / VIRUSES / PARASITES)

- **septic systems, humans, animals (wildlife and pets)**
Pet owners are requested to scoop & dispose in the garbage.
- The lake water has been frequently tested for coliform bacteria and although the water is safe for swimming, **THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT IS SAFE FOR DRINKING.**
(the analysis for drinking water is much more specific and precise)
- Beavers are notorious carriers of parasites. The main inlet into Lake Hughes drains a large area of beaver dams, lodges and ponds and beaver activity on the lake is very evident.

GIARDIA “BEAVER FEVER”

- A disease caused by a parasite often spread by beavers.
- Intestinal infection associated with a large variety of symptoms (pale, foul-smelling, frothy diarrhea accompanied by abdominal cramps, bloating and excessive gas, general malaise, fatigue, weakness, nausea, lack of appetite and weight loss).
- Difficult to diagnose - many cases go unreported - takes one to four weeks for symptoms to become apparent in an infected person – can linger for several months if untreated.

WELLS should be analyzed routinely.

The Municipalities usually organize an annual testing day with reduced cost for the test.

WATER TREATMENT (HOME DEVICES)

Treatment has two steps: filtration and disinfection. Both steps are necessary to remove or kill bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Consult Health Canada for information about Drinking Water Treatment Devices and Certification Standards (ANSI/NSF) and/or seek advice from a water treatment specialist. (SEE REFERENCES BELOW)

WATER DISINFECTION (OCCASIONAL)

Bring water to a rolling boil for **one** minute, there is no need to boil for 5 or 10 minutes.

IF CYANOBACTERIA ARE PRESENT (blue-green algae), BOILING WATER WILL NOT BE EFFECTIVE IN ELIMINATING THE TOXINS.

It is particularly important to be cautious about safe drinking water for susceptible groups of people – the very young under age 2, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems and serious illnesses.

REFERENCES:

Health Canada web site: Drinking Water Treatment Devices
Vermont Department of Health web site: “Obtaining Drinking Water from Lakes and Rivers”
H2Lab (Ste-Agathe) Tel: 819-326-8690 / 1-877-326-8690 (Water Testing & Water Treatment Equipment & Services)

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