NC Department of Health and Human Services

DHHS Role in Health Guidance for Private Wells

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February 7, 2022
Overview of Presentation

• Public Health Role

• Private Well and Health Program

• Examples
Drinking Water: Public Health Role

• New wells constructed after July 1, 2008 are required to be inspected and tested for certain contaminants*
  – Bacteria and inorganic chemicals like arsenic, mercury, and lead

• Managed by NCDHHS On-Site Water Protection Branch and local health departments

• Existing wells can be tested at the owners’ discretion

*Required by 15A NCAC 18A .3800
Drinking Water: Public Health Role

• For private drinking water wells, provide*
  – Information about the contaminant
  – Recommendations for use or treatment options
  – Recommendations for repeat sampling

• Provide input to DEQ on proposed groundwater standards

• For public water supplies, provide guidance if requested by DEQ or local authorities
  – Assistance with health risk evaluations, use recommendations

*Required by 15A NCAC 18A .3805
Private Well and Health Program

• Goal is to reduce or prevent exposure to harmful agents found in private wells

• Managed by the NCDHHS Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch (OEEB)

• OEEB Staff:
  – Kennedy Holt, Environmental Toxicologist
  – Phoebe Shurtleff, Environmental Health Specialist
Private Well and Health Program

• Bacteria and Inorganic Chemicals (like arsenic, mercury, and lead)
  – Monitor trends in contaminants
  – Help understand health impacts
  – Help determine treatment types
  – Develop factsheets and FAQs

• Other Contaminants
  – Similar support but typically less information
Examples
**GenX Provisional Drinking Water Health Goal**

- Level of GenX in drinking water below which no adverse health effects would be expected over a lifetime of consumption
- Calculated based on the most vulnerable population
- Non-regulatory, non-enforceable
- Can change as new information becomes available
  - Currently 140 ppt
GenX and PFAS Health Education

Epidemiology: Occupational and Environmental

GenX

In October 2021, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a PFAS Strategic Roadmap to address PFAS contamination nationwide. EPA has also released a final human health toxicity assessment for GenX chemicals Web, which will help advance the science around the health effects from GenX. EPA expects to release a national health advisory level for GenX in drinking water in spring 2022.

GenX in the Lower Cape Fear River Basin

https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/oee/a_z/genx.html

GenXToxicityAssess-Factsheet-WEB-122221.pdf

Radionuclides

• Investigation in Wake County, 2019
• Documented high concentrations of radionuclides in some wells
Radionuclides

• Shared scientific information on geological formations contributing to radionuclides in well water

• Developed FAQs for local health departments

• Attended meetings organized by Wake County to answer resident questions about radionuclides
Questions?

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