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Milwaukee's Drinking Water Continues to be Safe to Drink

Milwaukee's drinking water continues to be safe and clean despite sewer and sewage overflows and stormwater runoff into local rivers and Lake Michigan during and after record rainfall July 22 and heavy rain the previous week.

"We have great confidence in the drinking water quality and our treatment processes to ensure clean, safe drinking water," said Paul A. Biedrzycki, Director of Disease Control & Environmental Health for the City of Milwaukee Health Department. "The Milwaukee Water Works continuously tests the water as it enters the two treatment plants, and throughout the treatment and distribution systems. There is no indication of any public health risk."

The City of Milwaukee Health Department has not received reports of increased illness within the community as a result of the recent flooding events. The department will continue to conduct surveillance for disease as related to contaminated flood water clean-up within the community during the coming weeks. The Milwaukee Health Department has issued orders to close all city public beaches due to the extensive rainfall and flooding.

During and after recent heavy rains, the primary measurement of water clarity, turbidity, has not increased above normal for the lake water entering either plant. Microbiological testing of lake water entering the plant has not detected any indicators of fecal contamination or loss of water quality. The quality of treated drinking water has been unchanged throughout the period.

Continuous monitoring of treated drinking water is done to verify that the treatment processes are destroying and removing all contaminants from the intake water. All of the treatment processes are functioning optimally, as shown in monitoring results.

The [Milwaukee Water Works](#) backs up its water quality monitoring with frequent tests of other parameters. The most recent tests have found Milwaukee's drinking water to be safe and pure. The quality of treated drinking water has been unchanged throughout the stormy period and afterwards.

The multiple-step drinking water [treatment process](#) removes illness-causing microorganisms and contaminants. The water is disinfected with ozone, a highly reactive gas that destroys microorganisms, controls taste and odor and reduces byproducts from chlorine disinfection. Coagulation, settling and filtration remove additional particles. Fluoride is added for dental health. A final disinfection ensures safe, high quality drinking water throughout the distribution system and at consumer faucets.

The Milwaukee Water Works provides drinking water service to Milwaukee and 15 suburbs: Brown Deer, Butler, Franklin, Greendale, Greenfield, Hales Corners, St. Francis, Menomonee Falls, Mequon, New Berlin, Shorewood, Thiensville, Wauwatosa, West Allis and West Milwaukee.

This information is provided through the [interagency relationships](#) the Milwaukee Water Works maintains with city, state, and federal health and environmental agencies to monitor public health and drinking water quality.

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