

**FACT SHEET****Enteroviruses and Drinking Water from Private Wells****What are enteroviruses?**

Enteroviruses are a group of small viruses. There are two subgroups of enteroviruses: viruses that cause polio and viruses that cause non-polio-related diseases. The non-polio enteroviruses are second only to cold viruses as the most common cause of viral infections in humans. Enterovirus infections are most likely to occur during the summer and fall. They cause an estimated 10-15 million or more illnesses a year in the United States. Most enteroviruses are found in every part of the United States and throughout the world.

How can I become infected with enteroviruses?

You may become infected if you come in direct contact with:

- Respiratory secretions from an infected person (e.g., saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus),
- Surfaces or objects (e.g., drinking glasses or telephones) contaminated by the virus, or
- Stools of an infected person (e.g., through changing diapers of an infected infant or child)

Where and how common are enteroviruses found in drinking water?

Enteroviruses may be found in water sources such as private wells. Wells become contaminated when feces from infected humans enter the water through various means, including sewage overflows or broken sewage systems.

What are the symptoms of an enterovirus infection?

Most people who have an enterovirus infection show no symptoms at all. Infected individuals who become ill usually develop cold-like symptoms. Some people develop a flu-like illness with fever and muscle aches, or an illness with a rash. The symptoms typically last 7-10 days.

What should I do if I think I have an enterovirus infection?

See your health care provider to discuss your concerns.

How is an enterovirus infection diagnosed?

Laboratory tests can tell if enteroviruses are the cause of your illness. These tests are not always performed, and the laboratory usually needs to be instructed specifically to look for the organism.

What is the treatment for enterovirus infections?

There is no specific treatment available. Treatment of mild cases usually relieves symptoms such as fever, headache, and discomfort. In severe cases, hospitalization may be required. In some cases, the illness will go away without any treatment. Consult with your health care provider.

How do I remove enteroviruses from my drinking water?

Heating water at a full boil for 1 minute (3 minutes if you live in a high altitude) will kill or inactivate enteroviruses. Water should then be stored in a clean container with a lid and refrigerated.

Because of the small size of the viruses, a point-of-use filter will not remove them from water.

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You may also disinfect your well, although enteroviruses may be fairly resistant to disinfection. Contact your local health department for recommended procedures. Remember to have your well water tested regularly after disinfection to make sure the problem does not happen again.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/ncidod/healthywater