

SHOCK CHLORINATING YOUR WATER WELL

Note: This is a continuing series of topical information about water wells by Wayne Westburg, MWDrilling.

Everyone should chlorinate their water well at least once per year as part of a good maintenance program. Because of well access problems this should probably be done in the summer. If you have orange to black staining in your toilet bowls, you have an iron problem and chlorination will help precipitate out the iron and manganese which commonly cause the staining.

Following is the outline of the simple process of shock chlorination.

- Pour a quart of chlorox into a five gallon bucket and fill the bucket with water.
- Take this to the wellhead and remove the well cap (normally this will require a 9/16" wrench).
- Run a hose from a hose bib over to the well and run the hose stream of water down into the well.
- Slowly pour the five gallon bucket of chlorox mix into the stream of water going down the well.
- Swish the hose around so that you totally wet down the inner surface of the well casing.
- Continue doing this until you get a strong chlorine smell coming out of the hose. Continue pumping for several minutes after you obtain the strong smell to assure that you have chlorinated the well thoroughly.
- Next, go into the house and run water from every tap, one at a time, until you get the strong chlorine smell at each. In this manner you are decontaminating all of the piping in the house.
- Once these operations are complete, there should be no water usage for a 6 to 8 hour contact period in the house. So, obviously the best time for chlorination is just before bedtime or when you know there will be no one in the house needing water.
- After the contact period run water out of all the taps until the chlorine smell has dissipated and you can stand to use the water. Initially, the water may be very discolored or, if you have an iron bacteria problem, maybe even sludgy. Run it until it is clean.

If the staining persists, repeat the above process. It may take several treatments before you've gotten rid of the iron bacteria. If the mild staining persists, you may just have high minerals in the aquifer and may want to consider a water treatment system but most of the time this procedure will take care of the problem.

Submitted by Wayne Westburg, MGWC. If you have questions you would like to have addressed in this column, contact Wayne at w44west.wayne@aol.com