

Sept. 14, 2017

DOH URGES RESIDENTS IN MONROE COUNTY TO NOT DRINK CONTAMINATED WATER

Water under boil water notices is not safe to drink



Contact:

Communications Office

NewsMedia@flhealth.gov

(850) 245-4111

Tallahassee, Fla.— As Monroe County works to recover from Hurricane Irma, the **Florida Department of Health (DOH) is urging residents in the Florida Keys to not consume water under a boil water notice.**

At this time, water in Monroe County is unsafe for drinking and without electricity, residents are unable to boil water to decontaminate. Further, due to the storm, the overall sanitary conditions have been significantly impacted in the Florida Keys.

Unsafe drinking water and generally unsanitary conditions can lead to gastrointestinal illness, increased risk of infection and dehydration.

The department, along with local, state and federal partners, is working diligently to mobilize resources to the Florida Keys. Restoring power, safe drinking water and sound sanitary conditions are top priorities. Bottled water is being provided to residents who are currently in the Florida Keys. Also, portable toilets have been staged for use in multiple locations as sewer systems have been breached.

Practicing good hygiene is critical to preventing illness. Residents in the Florida Keys are urged to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer often and ensure that good hygiene practices are followed during food preparation.

Residents should not eat any food that may have come into contact with contaminated water from floods or tidal surges. Canned food should not be eaten if there is a bulging or opening on the can or screw caps, soda bottle tops or twist-caps. Undamaged, commercially canned foods can be saved if labels are removed and cans are disinfected in a bleach solution. Use 1/4 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water; re-label the cans including expiration date and type of food. Infants should preferably be breast fed or fed only pre-mixed canned baby formula. Do not use powdered formulas prepared with untreated water, use boiled water instead. When the power is out, refrigerators will only keep foods cool for approximately 4 hours – thawed and refrigerated foods should be thrown out after 4 hours.

Local officials will announce when water is safe to drink.

For further information, please contact your local county health department or visit www.floridahealth.gov or www.FloridaDisaster.org.

During severe weather and other emergencies, you can count on active alerts from the department's official social media accounts. One of the fastest ways to receive official and accurate health-related information is to monitor [@HealthyFla](#) on Twitter and on [Facebook](#).

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](#).