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Environmental NEWS RELEASE



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Federal Government Continues Scientific Rash Investigation in Flint

FLINT, MICH. (March 24, 2016) -- Federal, state and county health and water experts understand that Flint residents are concerned about the overall quality of their water – for drinking and for bathing. At this time, current analysis of the water in Flint does not indicate health concerns for bathing or showering. Residents should continue to use water filters, and pregnant women, women who are nursing, and children under six should use bottled water for drinking.

In coordination with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and state and county health agencies, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has taken water samples at 95 homes where residents have voiced concerns about health issues like skin rashes and hair loss. In addition to testing for lead, this sampling tests for other constituents including 26 metals, phosphate, and chloride. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and CDC public health specialists have been contacting residents to learn more about their skin rash conditions and evaluate medical information. The goal of this skin rash investigation, which is led by MDHHS and supported by CDC and EPA, is to identify specific public health interventions to mitigate rash illness. The investigation is expected to be completed in late April or early May 2016. For more information about it, visit http://www.michigan.gov/flintwater/0,6092,7-345-75251_75303-377567--,00.html.

Next week, in an effort to further inform the skin rash investigation, EPA will expand its current water sampling program in Flint homes and other points in the distribution system for disinfection byproducts, including trihalomethanes (THM) and additional organic compounds. This expanded effort will include a scientific study of the hot and cold water in the bathrooms of some homes. Their water will be analyzed for metals including lead and copper, organic compounds, disinfection byproducts, and other constituents. These data will be shared with MDHHS/CDC to inform their evaluation of possible health effects. EPA's previous testing in the Flint water distribution system, including commercial properties and schools - but not individual homes - has not found elevated levels of regulated THM. However, there may be other disinfection byproducts that are recognized by health agencies as potential skin irritants if found at elevated levels in individual homes.

For drinking water, EPA has taken samples at over 400 homes, which include tests for 13 heavy metals such as lead, copper, aluminum, and for phosphates. Individual results are shared with residents and general results are posted online at www.epa.gov/flint. This does not include water sampling conducted by other federal and state agencies or other organizations.

Federal and state water and health experts are reviewing available data from many sources to ensure public health recommendations are made based on the best available science. Additional updates will be provided as new information becomes available.

For more information on EPA's role in the Flint Drinking Water Response, visit www.epa.gov/flint.

For more information the health effects of lead, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>.

For more information on the state of Michigan's efforts, visit www.michigan.gov/flintwater.

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