

Coos Health & Wellness

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February 4, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Warning for Arago Drinking Water

Coos Health & Wellness is issuing a public health advisory for Arago drinking water. Testing has shown the presence of E. coli bacteria in the shallow ground water used by some residents in the community. Lab results were confirmed on Tuesday February 2. This is a public health concern as the presence of the E. coli bacteria indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headache or other symptoms.

Public Health officials advise continuous disinfection is a safe long-term approach for any resident using the shallow aquifer. Proper use of ozone, chlorine and some ultraviolet lights are examples of disinfection that can make the water safe from E. coli. A resident without a properly maintained disinfection system is advised to obtain bottled water. Boiling water will also destroy E. coli, but because boiling increases the concentration of nitrate, it should not be used by pregnant women or in infant formula as past test results have shown high nitrate levels in the area ground water.

Arago is an unincorporated area in Coos County between Coquille and Myrtle Point. The geology and flat terrain near the Coquille River provides a shallow aquifer shared by many residents using private wells. Contamination to such an aquifer can occur with increased run-off following heavy rain or when home septic systems become immersed.

Water analyzed this week included raw water samples collected from the Arago Community Church well. Testing the water before it has received any treatment is a public water system requirement to determine the need of disinfection. Although the church uses bottled water to assure safety and also provides disinfection church leaders have been anxious to assure community members were aware of the E. coli found in the shared aquifer.

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