

# **For Health Professionals**

## **Health Alerts**

### **Health Alert #19 - City of Buffalo Water - 07/12/2002**

The City of Buffalo water system violated a drinking water standard on July 11, 2002.

Normal turbidity levels from the City of Buffalo Water plant are less than 0.3 turbidity units. A water samples taken on July 11, 2002 showed a level of 2.5 turbidity units. This exceeded the standard of 1 turbidity unit.

Because of this elevated level of turbidity, there is an increased chance that the water may contain disease-causing organisms. Turbidity has no direct health effects, however, it can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth. Turbidity may indicate the presence of disease causing organisms including bacteria, viruses, and parasites. These organisms can cause general gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and headaches.

The Buffalo Water Authority has issued a statement (see attached) directing the public, particularly those who are immunocompromised, to contact their private physicians if they should experience these gastro-intestinal symptoms. Please keep in mind that symptoms are general and may be caused by food or water exposures unrelated to this incident, or other disease etiologies.

For additional information on common foodborne and waterborne diseases please visit the following link:

<http://www.cdc.gov/health/foodill.htm>

The Erie County Health Department is not recommending that drinking water be boiled, as no disease-causing organisms have been identified in the water sample tested by the City of Buffalo Water Authority.

Please contact the Erie County Health Department, Bureau of Disease Control (716) 858-7698 with any questions.