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NUNAVIK PUBLIC HEALTH RELEASE

CALL FOR VIGILANCE
Water contamination by E. Coli in Puvirnituq

TRANSLATION

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We wish to inform you that E. coli contamination has been detected in the Puvirnituq distribution system. The current situation represents a risk of outbreak.

Instructions given to the population, to be followed immediately:

- **Don't drink tap water** without boiling it (at least 1 minute).
- **Use bottled or boiled water (at least 1 minute**) for drinking, cooking, washing fruit and vegetables, preparing drinks or baby milk.
- **Wash your hands regularly** with clean water and soap**.**
- **Watch out for symptoms** such as diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea or vomiting, and consult a health professional if necessary**.**

We remind healthcare professionals to remain watchful for a **potential increase in cases of gastroenteritis** linked to E. coli contamination of water and, depending on the clinical situation, to consider doing a microbiological analysis to confirm the diagnosis and the pathogen involved.

Most common symptoms:

- Watery or bloody diarrhea.
- Abdominal cramps.
- Nausea, vomiting.
- Moderate fever in some cases.

Severe cases to monitor:

In rare cases, certain strains of **E. coli** can lead to serious complications, such as **hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS)**, notably in young children, the elderly and immunocompromised individuals.

What is expected of clinicians:

A MADO-reporting mechanism is in place for cases of verocytotoxin-producing E. coli infections, or those presenting manifestations associated with hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) or thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP). (Form AS-770)

Exceptionally, in connection with the present situation, Public Health is requesting the cooperation of Puvirnituq clinicians to report all positive E. Coli results for an indefinite period of time.

The following information must be submitted:

- Last name, first name
- Date of birth
- RAMQ Number
- Patient contact information
- Date of collection of sample
- Type of specimen
- Result

Please send this information by email at:
mado-declarations.rr17@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

The responsible authorities are actively working to resolve the situation. A thorough follow-up is underway. Given the current difficulties associated with the breakdown of the distribution system, and the time required for repairs, a precautionary boil-water advisory remains in effect until the drinking water treatment plant resumes operations. The public will be informed as soon as the water is safe to drink again.

For further information, you can contact the Environmental Health team at:
environmental.health.rr17@ssss.gouv.qc.ca