

Boil-water notice lifted from Texas city where microbe found

October 7 2020



Texas Governor Greg Abbott and other state officials listen to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality executive director Toby Baker talk about steps to be taken so water is safe again for the community of Lake Jackson, Texas on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2020. A Houston-area official says it will take 60 days to ensure a city drinking water system is purged of a deadly, microscopic parasite that led to warnings over the weekend not to drink tap water. Lake Jackson City Manager Modesto Mundo said Monday that three of 11 samples of the city's water indicated preliminary positive results for the naegleria fowleri

microbe. (Marie D. De Jesús/Houston Chronicle via AP)

A boil-water notice was lifted Tuesday from the drinking-water system of a Houston-area city where water tainted with a deadly, microscopic parasite was blamed for the death of a 6-year-old boy.

In a several days of flushing of the Brazosport Water Authority's [water](#) delivery system. The flushing was ordered after three of 11 samples of the Lake Jackson's water tested positive for the deadly flagellate.

One sample came from the home of Josiah McIntyre, the 6-year-old boy whom doctors said died earlier this month after being infected with the brain-eating parasite, [city officials](#) said.

The deadly amoeba does not cause an infection if it is in water that a person drinks as it is killed by normal levels of stomach acid. However, people can be infected when water containing the microbe enters the body through the nose

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, who issued a disaster declaration for Lake Jackson, has said all indications point to the case being isolated and that the suspected problem in the boy's death was traced back to a splash pad. The TCEQ said it and the city will conduct daily monitoring for the microbe going forward.

The Brazosport Water Authority initially warned eight communities on Sept. 25 not to use tap water for any reason except to flush toilets. It lifted that warning the next day for all communities but Lake Jackson, where the authority's [water treatment plant](#) is situated. The advisory also was canceled for two [state prisons](#) and Dow Chemical's massive Freeport works.

The ban was lifted in Lake Jackson on Sept. 27 but replaced with the boil-water notice.

Naegleria fowleri is a free-living microscopic amoeba, or single-celled living organism commonly found in warm freshwater and soil, according to the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It usually infects people when contaminated water enters the body through the nose. From there it travels to the brain and can cause a rare and debilitating disease called primary amebic meningoencephalitis.

The infection is usually fatal and typically occurs when people go swimming or diving in warm freshwater places such as lakes and rivers. In very rare instances, naegleria infections may also occur when contaminated water from other sources (such as inadequately chlorinated swimming pool water or heated and contaminated tap water) enters the nose.

"This is a terrible tragedy that made something that was rare, and even vanishingly rare, actually happen," said John Hellersedt, commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services.

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