

BACTERIA IN DRINKING WATER

Bacterial contamination in the water source can be eliminated by disinfecting the well. Steps can be followed to clean up the bacteria contamination. Bacteria typically are not a common occurrence in the well but sometimes a laboratory test shows the presence of bacteria.

These bacteria consist of two types of groups: Total Coliform Bacteria and Fecal Bacteria. Total coliform typically indicates surface water contamination in the well. These bacteria are found naturally in soils and on vegetation.

The Fecal Bacteria are indicators of sewage contamination. The bacteria live in the intestinal tract of warm blooded-animals and are of a more serious nature if found in the water supply.

The presence of one or both bacteria groups indicates that a pathway into your water supply exists through which disease-causing bacteria can enter. The water will be safe to drink again once the test results show no sign of contamination.

DISINFECTION OF WELLS

1. Mix 1/2 gallon household bleach with four (4) gallons of water in a large bucket.
2. Pour the mixture directly into the well casing or spring box.
3. One at a time, open all the taps inside and outside of your home until you smell the bleach. Once the bleach odor is detected, shut off that tap and move on to the next one.
4. Once all taps have detectable bleach odors in them, let the entire system sit unused for at least six (6) hours.
5. Flushing out the bleach solution:
 - a. Open outside taps first and let water run several hours. This is necessary as it is undesirable to flood your sewage system with chlorine.
 - b. Flush all other taps next
6. Allow 1 or 2 days of normal water use prior to collecting another sample for bacterial testing

SAMPLE COLLECTION

1. Use a sterilized bottle from the lab. It will contain a preservative which should not be dumped out.
2. **DO NOT** collect samples from swivel faucets, garden hoses, or any faucet with an aerator that cannot be removed. Typically a bath tub faucet is an ideal location for collecting the sample.
3. **DO NOT** touch the inside of the bottle, the inside of the bottle cap, or the threads of the bottle neck. This can introduce bacteria from your hands into the water sample.
4. Let the water run for 5-10 minutes. Fill the bottle up to the 100 mL mark but not to exceed 120 mL.
5. Return sample to lab within 30 hours of collection time. Refrigerate the sample if more than a few hours lapse before the lab receives it.