

Understanding your drinking water Bacteria Test Results

We test private drinking water systems for indicator bacteria (total coliforms and E. coli bacteria) they may show if the water is contaminated with sewage or manure. However, the lab can't test water for every type of harmful germ. For example, they don't check for viruses (e.g. hepatitis) or protozoa (e.g. Giardia). It is recommended you test your water at least 1-2 years.

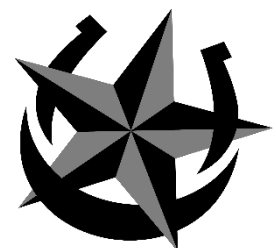
What are coliforms?

Coliforms are a group of bacteria that are almost everywhere (e.g. soil, vegetation, sewage or manure).

Your water sample may have coliforms in it if surface water gets into the well (cracked casing, seal around well is not sound or cap is missing or loose)

What are E. coli?

E. coli are bacteria that people and some types of animals have in their intestines.



How to understand your test results?

Results	What it Means
Total Coliforms = absent/nil < 1 E.coli = absent/nil < 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The water tested was satisfactory because indicator bacteria were not detected in the water sample.• The water tested showed no evidence of being contaminated with bacteria at the time the sample was taken. The sample was only tested for E. coli and coliforms.• Results from one water sample don't reflect the overall health risk of the private water system. You still need to monitor and treat it properly.
Total Coliforms = present Number of bacteria E.coli = present Number of bacteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The water tested was unsatisfactory because coliforms or E. coli bacteria were detected in the water sample. There may also be other harmful germs in the water sample.• Don't drink the water or use it to prepare food without boiling it first.• You will need to shock your well to kill the bacteria.• If past samples have shown coliforms or E.coli, the water source could be contaminated and it is recommended that a professional come out and look at your system to determine route cause of the issue.• Send in another water sample after a treatment system is installed or your well has been shock chlorinated to make sure the bacteria is gone.

