

Interpreting Your Test Results

You should receive your results in approximately 10 days. Here's what the lab report may say:

Bacteriological Analysis

ND = Not Detected. Coliform organisms were not detected. Water is safe for human consumption.

POS = Positive. Coliform organisms were detected. Safety cannot be assured. Have your well and plumbing chlorinated by a well driller as soon as possible. Collect and mail another sample 2-3 days after chlorinating. If another positive result is received, contact the Health Department.

EC POS = Positive for E. coli organisms. Discontinue water usage for drinking and cooking purposes, obtain bottled water, and contact the Health Department. Have your well and plumbing chlorinated by a well driller as soon as possible. Collect and mail another sample 2-3 days after chlorinating. Continue to use bottled water for drinking and cooking until a "ND" result is received.



Partial Chemical Analysis

	<u>Objectionable</u>	<u>Problem</u>
<u>Nitrate</u>	Over 10 mg/L	Nitrate poisoning, especially infants and immunosuppressed individuals
<u>Nitrite</u>	Over 1.0 mg/L	Same as above
<u>Chloride</u>	Over 250 mg/L	Taste, corrosion
<u>Fluoride</u>	Over 4.0 mg/L Under 0.8 mg/L	Teeth mottling Tooth decay
<u>Hardness</u>	Over 250 mg/L Under 25 mg/L	Lime deposits, soap scum Corrosion
<u>Iron</u>	Over 0.5 mg/L	Staining, taste, odor, color
<u>Sulfate</u>	Over 250 mg/L	Laxative effect, taste, odor
<u>Sodium</u>	Over 160 mg/L	Taste, corrosion, dietary restrictions



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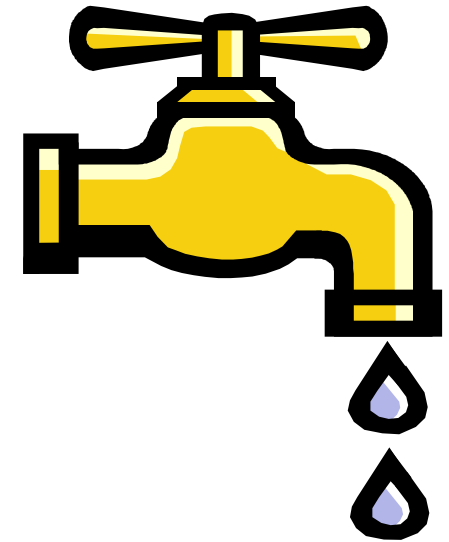
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Homeowner's Guide to Water Sampling



Barry-Eaton District Health Department



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Water Sampling Kit

The water sampling bottle you have just been given is from the State Drinking Water Laboratory in Lansing. The box is labeled with the lab's mailing address and contains an instruction sheet, blank lab slip, protective packing material, and a bottle.

Most of the post offices in our district need to receive samples by 4:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday for regular next day delivery to the lab. Take the samples to the post office the same day you collect them.



Water sampling kit

In addition, a satellite lab is available in Grand Rapids on Fuller Street and is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

IMPORTANT: Bacteria samples must be received in the lab no later than 30 hours after collection for results to be reliable.

If You are Sampling For New Well Construction...

All new wells must be sampled for coliform bacteria shortly after construction is completed. Once you no longer smell chlorine at your taps, turn on a garden hose and run it for approximately 3 hours to ensure that chlorine residuals have been flushed from the well. Be sure to direct the hose away from your septic system and well. **The sample must be collected from the pressure tank sampling tap, not the kitchen sink.** Have buckets available to catch the water.



Pressure tank sampling tap

If You are Sampling Due to Illness or General Curiosity...

The sample should be collected from your primary drinking water tap, usually the kitchen sink.

What Am I Sampling For?

Two substances for which national monitoring standards have been set pose a threat to health whenever certain levels in drinking water are exceeded. They are coliform bacteria and nitrate.

Coliform Bacteria

The coliform bacteria family, especially the fecal coliform group, is common to the intestinal track of humans and warm-blooded animals. Coliform organisms may also be found growing in soil and organic matter. Because this group is most commonly associated with sewage or surface water, it is used as an indicator of the sanitary quality of drinking water. A bacteriological analysis by a qualified lab is necessary to determine if coliform bacteria are present in your water. Use **code "B"** on the lab slip provided and enclose a check to the "State of Michigan" for the appropriate fee.

Nitrate

Nitrate (from fertilizer, sewage, and feedlots) poses an immediate threat to infants under six months of age and to immuno-suppressed individuals whenever certain levels in drinking water are exceeded. A partial chemical analysis by a qualified lab is necessary to determine if nitrate is present in your water and, if so, at what concentration.

In addition, for households in which someone is on a restricted sodium diet, a partial chemical analysis will tell you how much sodium is in your water. It will also test for chloride, hardness, iron, and sulfate levels. For households with young children, this test will indicate how much fluoride is present, which is important for children's dental health. Finally, a partial chemical analysis can serve as an indicator of other contaminants in your water supply and whether additional, more in-depth analyses are needed. Use **code "R"** on the lab slip provided and enclose a check to the "State of Michigan" for the appropriate fee.