

Water Testing Recommendation



Work has recently been completed on your water well or pump, or you've had a new well drilled. Opening the well seal may have allowed coliform bacteria into your well. Because coliform bacteria have the potential to make persons who consume it ill, we **strongly recommend** you have your water tested. In addition, it is helpful to know if your water contains nitrate/nitrite that can harm infants in a short period of time.

Upon completion of the work identified above, your well was disinfected to remove bacteria that may have entered your water system, unless you signed a waiver. To assist you in determining if your water system has been successfully disinfected and the water is safe to drink and to inform you of the levels of nitrates/nitrites that may be present in your water supply, the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (Department) can provide, for a nominal fee, coliform and nitrate tests. Results from the testing will be reported to the well owner.

If you had a new well drilled, please wait two weeks after the pumping system was installed before requesting the kit. If you are concerned about water quality during this time, you may want to consider using bottled water for cooking and consumption.

If coliform bacteria is found in the sample, it's important to note there are many possible sources, such as the well, water pressure tank, water treatment equipment, plumbing, or a filter on the faucet.

If the nitrate/nitrite level is above 10 milligrams per liter (mg/L) or parts per million (ppm), the water is not safe for infants, pregnant women or nursing mothers to drink.

To obtain current pricing and a sample kit, contact the Department's Environmental Laboratory at 402-471-3935 or online at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Public-Health-Lab.aspx>

Please follow the sample collection instructions very carefully. Failure to do so may result in inaccurate results and extra costs when no problem exists. The best time to take the samples is shortly before the mail leaves your local post office, early in a week that has no holidays.

Coliform Bacteria

Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present. Fecal coliforms and *E. coli* are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely-compromised immune systems.

Nitrate

Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm can cause shortness of breath and blue baby syndrome for infants of less than six months of age. If untreated, they may die. For this reason nursing or pregnant mothers, in addition to infants, are advised to not drink water that contains nitrates above 10 ppm.

Other Contaminants

In some areas of the state, arsenic, uranium and/or selenium may be present. These are naturally occurring elements in the ground.

Arsenic

Drinking water containing arsenic in excess of the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 (micrograms) µg/Liter (L)

over many years could cause skin damage or problems with circulation, and may increase the risk of getting cancer.

Uranium

Some people who drink water containing uranium in excess of the MCL of 30 µg/L over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer and kidney toxicity.

Selenium

Selenium is an essential nutrient. However, some people who drink water containing selenium in excess of the MCL of 50 µg/L over many years could experience hair or fingernail losses, numbness in fingers or toes, or problems with their circulation.

Other Contaminants

In some areas of the state, arsenic, uranium and/or selenium may be present. These are naturally occurring elements in the ground.

For more information, contact

DHHS – Division of Public Health
Water Well Standards Program
NDEQ-Atrium
1200 N St, Ste 400
PO Box 98922
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922
402-471-0546

Date work completed _____

Contractor Name _____

License Number _____

