

# INTERPRETATION OF BACTERIOLOGICALLY UNSAFE DRINKING WATER RESULTS

## TOTAL COLIFORM PRESENT

The presence of total coliform indicates a pathway exists allowing surface water and shallow ground water to enter your water supply. A search for the pathway should be made. The pathway could be caused by structural defects of the well or system, contamination resulting from repairs or new construction that occurred without proper disinfection, or improper collection techniques.



Water that is bacteriologically unsafe should not be used for drinking unless properly disinfected before use by boiling it for at least five minutes. (If your nitrate-nitrogen level is above 5 mg/l, boiling will concentrate the level of nitrate-nitrogen. Do not use if you are pregnant or for infants less than 6 months old.)

## E. COLI PRESENT OR ABSENT

The presence of E. coli indicates the presence of fecal material in the water and that the water may be contaminated with organisms that can cause disease. If your sample is E. coli absent it does not contain fecal material.

## POSSIBLE SOURCES OF BACTERIAL CONTAMINATION

Did you follow the sampling instructions?

If the faucet used was a swing, swivel or leaking faucet (example: kitchen tap), resample from another faucet (example: pressure tank faucet or bathroom faucet).

If you have a nonvermin-proof cap or seal or a loose cap, insects may have gotten into your well.

The casing is not properly sealed into the rock formation.

The casing is not terminated 12 inches above the ground.

The well terminates in a nonconforming pit, which may be subject to flooding or seepage of groundwater.

Any recent work on the plumbing system will contaminate your plumbing system. If any of these reasons apply, contact a well driller or pump installer to correct the structural defect. If none of these reasons apply, follow the disinfection instructions or contact a well driller or pump installer for disinfection.