



Good Life. Great Resources.

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

*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 so your sample arrives at the lab promptly.*



DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

## 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, the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy strongly recommends 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 Public Health Environmental Lab 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 or those who are pregnant or nursing to drink.

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



Here is information about coliform bacteria, nitrate and other contaminants that may be present in some wells.

## 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 less than six months of age. If untreated, they may die. For this reason infants and those who are nursing or pregnant 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/Liter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{Liter}$ ) 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  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$  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  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$  over many years could experience hair or fingernail losses, numbness in fingers or toes, or problems with their circulation.

Your water well professional should fill out the information below after completing work on your drinking water well.

Date work completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor name: \_\_\_\_\_

License number: \_\_\_\_\_



For more information, contact:

Water Well Standards Program  
Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy  
245 Fallbrook Blvd., Ste. 100  
PO Box 98922  
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922  
402-471-0546