

TOTAL COLIFORM BACTERIA IN WELL WATER



Most coliform bacteria are not harmful, but if coliform bacteria are present in your water, your well may also be contaminated with disease-causing organisms like E. coli.

Bacteria likely will not cause a change in the taste, color, or smell of your water. Water quality can change over time, especially if you replace parts or perform other well maintenance, so it's important to test your water for coliform bacteria every year.

If your water test shows that coliform is PRESENT, you should take action.

HOW DO I PROTECT MY WELL?

- Inspect and maintain your well and your septic system (if you have one) regularly
- Keep septic systems and other contamination sources the minimum recommended distance from your well
- Test and disinfect your well any time you replace any parts or make repairs



For sources and more information about bacteria in wells, visit:

tillamookchc.org/wells

Coliform bacteria are a group of bacteria found in soil, water, and the intestines of some animals. They can enter wells through groundwater, surface water run-off, cracked or broken well parts, or a leaking septic system.

HEALTH EFFECTS

Disease-causing bacteria may lead to the following symptoms:

- Gastrointestinal (stomach & digestive) symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, cramps, and nausea
- Headaches
- Fever
- Fatigue
- In severe cases, death

WHO'S MOST AT RISK?

Anyone can have bacterial contamination in their well, but where you live and who is in your home could put you at higher risk for contamination or negative health effects from drinking contaminated water. Homes that have any of the following should be extra sure to test their water regularly:

- Infants, children under 3, older adults, or people with weakened immune systems
- Wells with casings that are not watertight, especially if damaged or leaking
- Wells located near septic systems, sewers, and animal feedlots

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE BACTERIA IN MY WATER?

- Switch to a safe drinking water source, such as bottled water, or boil water before drinking
- Talk to your health care provider about possible health effects
- Contact the [Oregon Domestic Well Safety Program](#) for more information and advice. Consider talking to a well or drinking water professional for tips on how to improve water quality.