



WATER TESTING

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules that protect public drinking water systems do not apply to individual water systems, such as privately owned wells. **This article is directed at individual water system owners:** It is up to you to make sure that your water is safe to drink.

The Three Lakes District offers a service of water testing. Our Lab, located at the District's Administration Building, is State-certified. The State Health Department and mortgage companies, who may require that the well be tested if you are selling your home, accept our test results.

Our Lab is equipped to perform testing for Total Coliform and Ecoli/Fecal Coliform. It is a standard bacteriological water test that indicates the presence or absence of those bacterias. There are many other minerals and metals that can be tested for but you must seek a private Laboratory to perform those tests for you. There are several such Labs in the Denver area.

Coliform bacteria are microbes found in the digestive systems of warm-blooded animals, in soil, on plants, and in surface water. These microbes typically do not make you sick; however, because microbes that do cause disease are hard to test for in the water, "total coliform" are tested instead. If the total coliform count is high, then it is very possible that harmful germs like viruses, bacteria, and parasites might also be found in the water.

Fecal coliform bacteria are a specific kind of total coliform. The feces and digestive systems of humans and warm-blooded animals contain millions of fecal coliforms. E. coli is part of the fecal coliform group. Fecal coliforms and E. coli are usually harmless; however, a positive test may mean that feces and harmful germs have found their way into your water source. These harmful germs can cause diarrhea, dysentery and hepatitis.

Although it is not necessary to test your well periodically, we recommend testing if you have a concern, such as the color of your water, taste, smell, or known problems with well water in your area, or if you repair or replace any part of your water system. If a bacterium is present, we can advise you in the treatment of your well to remove the bacteria.

A special sample bottle is required to be used to contain your water sample because it contains a dechlorinating agent which dechlorinates a chlorinated sample before testing. The District charges \$20.00 which includes the sample bottle and performance of the test. Samples must be received by the District within 24 hours of collection and can be read 48 hours after the test has been performed. We receive samples prior to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, except Holidays.

It is well known that fluoride helps prevent and even reverses the early stages of tooth decay. Optimal levels of fluoride are between 0.7 and 1.2 ppm (parts fluoride per million parts of water). Fluoride exists naturally in water sources, and contrary to popular belief, it is unnecessary to add it to your tap water. For those of you with children in the home, if you have any questions about your water's fluoride content, or whether your child is receiving too much or too little fluoride, talk to your doctor or dentist.