

Total and Fecal Coliform Bacteria

USEPA Contaminant Classification:	Primary, (Health-related)
EPA Maximum "Safe" Levels:	None allowed

Source: Total Coliform Bacteria is a classification of numerous different bacteria of the Coliform Group. These organisms are very common and are found in large quantities in the soil down to about forty-fifty feet. Most of the Coliform bacteria are harmless to humans, and some even aid in our digestion of plant materials. If your water sample is found to contain Coliform bacteria, we automatically test for the presence of fecal bacteria, (specifically E. Coli). Fecal Coliform bacteria flourish in the digestive tracts of mammals, (including humans). Some of these mutated organisms may cause diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and in the very old, very young and the immuno-suppressed, may even cause death. If any bacteria are present in your water sample, (Total and/or Fecal), the Health Department labels your water non-potable, (undrinkable) and recommends immediate action, (usually well chlorination). Consult with your local Health Department or Certified Laboratory for corrective actions if you have bacteria in your water supply. **A spring, hand-dug well, buried well, Cistern, or wells with a one-piece (non-vermin-proof) well cap are all very likely to be contaminated with Coliform bacteria.**

Health Effects: While most of the Coliform bacteria are harmless to humans, a small percentage of Fecal Coliform bacteria may cause intestinal distress and in more severe cases nausea, vomiting and even death.

Home Damage Effects: Total/Fecal Coliform bacteria in regular numbers are not known to cause any damage to your home plumbing or appliances. They may clog or damage certain water treatment products, (mainly reverse osmosis systems) or any other product that filter water using a small pore size less than ten microns.

How to Fix Contaminated Water:

- 1. Well Inspection-** If you have Coliform bacteria in your water, your well should be inspected and by a licensed plumber to check for possible infiltration sources.
- 2. Chlorination-** In most cases, a proper chlorination is all that is needed to clear up the contamination once the source is identified and fixed. The EPA recommends at least three chlorination attempts before any bactericidal treatment equipment is installed.
- 3. Install 2-piece well cap-** These replace the old caps and prevent insects and surface water from entering your well and contamination the water.
- 4. Treatment Equipment-** A well chlorinator, chemical feed system, Ultra-violet purifier or Ozonation system are all effective at killing bacteria. Consult with your Local Health Department and get at least three estimates **before** buying a system. Make sure the system is EPA-approved and NSF-certified.