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Relationship between total coliform and e- coli

FAQs What should I test my water for and how often? The list of contaminants below was drawn up by the Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Department of Water Supply Engineering of the Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) after a review of the extensive records of nhdes' public water supply program. This is not an exhaustive list, but provides a reasonable balance between the high cost of testing for all contaminants required by the Safe Drinking Water Act and the contaminants most commonly found in New Hampshire. Recommended tests for Rock Wells: bacteria, nitrate, nitrite, chloride, sodium, iron, manganese, pH, hardness, fluoride, arsenic, lead, copper and radiological. Recommended Test for Excavated Wells: Bacteria, Nitrate, Nitrite, Chloride, Sodium, Iron, Manganese, PH, Hardness, Fluoride, Lead and Copper. All parameters listed for a dug well are contained in the NHDES Standard Analysis package. Organic Chemistry Tests: Most contaminants in the organic group come from artificial sources. In general, testing for organic chemicals is not required unless an individual review of the site of the nearby area and up from your well identifies past or present land use that would make this contamination possible. Contact: Lou Barinelli, Technical Director (lucio.barinelli@dhhs.state.nh.us) Publication: Suggested water quality tests for private wells What is the difference between total coliforms, E.coli and non-coliform bacteria? Total coliform bacteria are a group of easily cultivated organisms used to indicate water quality. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency considers any total collision to be unacceptable in drinking water. Total coliform bacteria consist of environmental and fecal types. Coliforms are easy to isolate, present in greater numbers and generally survive longer in an aquatic environment than viruses, parasites and more serious types of bacteria. Most total coliforms are not considered pathogens under normal conditions. E. coli is a species of coliform bacterium that is directly linked to fecal contamination by residues of warm-blooded animals, including humans. Some strains are pathogens in humans. Non-coliform bacteria are mainly environmental organisms and, in large numbers, can compete with total coliforms and hinder the de-deportation of coliforms. High levels of non-coliform bacteria indicate a reduction in water quality. It is common for new wells or new pipelines to have high levels of bacteria resulting from drilling and plumbing processes. If bacteria are present in a well, it can have construction problems allowing surface water and possibly animals to enter the well. Sometimes it is necessary to disinfect the well more than once. Bacteria can also multiply in some treatment systems, iron filters. Contact: Mona Freese, Microbiology Supervisor (raymona.freese@dhhs.state.nh.us) Publication: Interpreting the Presence of Coliform Bacteria in Drinking Water How do I disinfect my well? Place the following Disinfectant in the well: For dug wells or wells drilled less than 200 feet deep, add one gallon of liquid bleach for every 1,000 gallons of water in your well. The number of gallons in your well can be found by multiplying the diameter of the well (in feet) by itself, multiplying this result by 5.9. This number is then multiplied by the depth of the water in the well (in feet). The result is the volume of water in your well in gallons. For wells drilled over 200 feet, use calcium hypochlorite tablets (chlorine pool tablets). Place the tablets in a heavy bag and break them into pieces of marble with a hammer (be careful, this material is dangerous). Pour into your well, 2 ounces of calcium hypochlorite for every 30 meters deep. Let him sit for several hours, then continue with the second step. This amount assumes that your well casing is 6 inches (like most) and that you are using 70% chlorine tablets (most range between 65 and 95% of available chlorine). Once the disinfectant is in the well, run each faucet in the house until you smell chlorine and then turn off the faucet. Then run a garden hose from an external faucet to the well. Turn on the tap and let the chlorinated water run down the sides of the well. Recirculate the water back to the well for an hour or more. Now remove the hose from the well, reinstall the lid and let the whole system sit at least overnight. In the coming days, wash the well by running an external faucet. Do not run the well pump for too long. Flush away from the plants, as the strong chlorine solution will kill them. Do not drain chlorine in your septic system. Continue using the water until you can no longer smell chlorine in the house (this can take several days). We then recommend that you use the water for another week in order to allow any possible sources of contamination time to infect the well. Finally, retest the water for bacteria. Contact: Mona Freese, Microbiology Supervisor (raymona.freese@dhhs.state.nh.us) What is the white, skinned scale I see in my pots and/or taps? Do I need a softener or an oxidation filter? More than likely it is calcium or magnesium commonly identified as hardness. The presence or absence of conventional hardness in drinking water is not known to pose a risk to the health of users. Hardness is usually considered an aesthetic factor of water quality. The presence of some dissolved minerals in drinking water is typically what gives the water its characteristic and pleasant taste. Iron and manganese are the coloring elements and are usually aesthetically unpleasant. The pH of your water, along with the proportions of iron, manganese and hardness determine which treatment is justified. Contact: Lou Barinelli, Technical Director (lucio.barinelli@dhhs.state.nh.us) Publications: in drinking water How dangerous is arsenic in water? The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classified arsenic as a human carcinogen (cancer (cancer agent). Long-term exposure to arsenic has been linked to cancer, cardiovascular disease, immune disorders, diabetes and other medical conditions. Specific health issues regarding arsenic should be directed to your personal physician or to the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Health Risk Assessment. The EPA recently revised the arsenic standard for public water systems from 0.050 mg/L to 0.010 mg/L. Contact: Lou Barinelli, Technical Director (lucio.barinelli@dhhs.state.nh.us) Publication: Arsenic in Drinking Water My doctor/dentist wants me to check fluoride in my water. Because? Fluoride occurs naturally in New Hampshire rock and is often present in water samples taken from rock wells (drilled). There are several regions of the state where fluoride concentrations are high. Fluoride in drinking water is beneficial at low concentrations, but may present health concerns at higher concentrations. It has also been shown to reduce dental caries in children if they receive adequate levels. To determine whether fluoride supplements are needed or to prescribe the appropriate dose, the dentist may ask you to take the water test for fluoride. Contact: Lou Barinelli, Technical Director (lucio.barinelli@dhhs.state.nh.us) Publication : Fluoride in Drinking Water Should I have my water tested for VOCs? The term volatile organic chemicals or VOCs refers to a group of chemicals (including MtBE) that are used as solvents and in many household products; they are also constituents in gasoline and fuel oil. These chemicals evaporate or volatilize when exposed to air. The most common sources of VOCs are products such as gasoline, fuel oils, de-fattening, solvents, polishing, cosmetics and dry cleaning solutions. It should be tested for VOCs if your well is at risk from any of the sources mentioned above. Voc testing in most laboratories includes approximately 60 individual compounds. Contact: Lou Barinelli, Technical Director (lucio.barinelli@dhhs.state.nh.us) Publication: Organic in Drinking Water What is MtBE and should I test for this? MtBE stands for methyl tertiary butyl ether. It is one of several oxygenated added to gasoline to increase combustion, thus burning cleaner. It is released into the environment through transport accidents, leakage of underground and above-ground storage tanks, leakage of gasoline distribution pipes, vessels and simple overchipping or sloppy practices. As an initial test, we recommend performing the full VOC analysis (above). If an original analysis has already determined that your well has been impacted by the MtBE, the compound can be analyzed independently so that you can monitor any changes. Contact: Lou Barinelli, Technical Director (lucio.barinelli@dhhs.state.nh.us) Publication: MtBE in The Drinking format Acrobat Reader. Download a free reader from Adobe. NH Department of Environmental Services | 29th Hazen Drive | Voice mail 95 | Concord, NH 03302-0095 (603) 271-3503 | TDD Access: Relé Relé 1-800-735-2964 | Time: M-F, 8am to 4pm 8am to 4pm

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