



Well Water Testing Positive for E. Coli

According to the EPA, E. Coli contamination in well water is caused by human or animal fecal matter. This means a potential breach in the well system allowing the contamination. This root cause should be determined and resolved. Suggested steps include:

- The well casing, both above and below grade as well as the cap should be inspected by a well contractor to ensure there is no damage allowing contamination. Surface contamination is a common source.
- If a septic system is present, proper function should be determined through an inspection and if not properly functioning, repairs may be necessary.
- All components of any septic system should be an appropriate distance from the well and in accordance with local requirements. Ideally, the septic is 100' or more from the well, although this does not ensure prevention of contamination.
- No storage of manure or other potential contaminants in the area of the well.
- Make any repairs to the well system or surrounding components (septic, etc) as needed.
- Disinfect the well system or "shock" as determined by a well contractor.
- Retest for bacteria. Most municipalities recommend a second test up to 7 days later to ensure the contamination has not returned.
- If the well does not pass follow-up testing, a UV Light or other on-demand treatment may be needed as determined by a water treatment company. However, a thorough evaluation of the well system and repairing as needed is recommended prior to relying on a UV Light or similar on-demand treatment system.

Always contact the local municipality, health department or authority holding jurisdiction over wells in your area for additional guidance. This document is only intended as a helpful resource but other factors may be involved in your situation.

Additional info available through the EPA and Water Systems Council.