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TIP SHEET #8
WELL WATER TESTING

1. When should I test my well?

- a. Test a new well that has been drilled. After the contractor chlorinates the well and pumps the chlorine clear, allow the well to return to normal conditions for about a week - then contact a lab for testing. Test before the water is used for drinking.
- b. Test before you purchase a new property.
- c. Test if you notice anything unusual such as a different taste, odor, or color or any other changes in quality.
- d. Test annually. The well may be clean now, but not necessarily forever.

2. For what should I test?

Test for total and fecal coliform and for nitrates.

3. What does it mean if my well tests positive for coliform?

When these bacteria are found in a water sample, the well may be contaminated by surface runoff or fecal wastes.

4. What does it mean if my well tests positive for nitrates?

Nitrates indicate sewage or fertilizer pollution.

PROPER COLLECTION OF WATER SAMPLE FOR BACTERIAL ANALYSIS

1. Select a glass or plastic container that will hold at least one (1) pint.
2. Boil the jar and lid for ten **(10) minutes**, or run them through the dishwasher.
3. Select an appropriate sampling point. The faucet you select should not have a swivel or a mixing control. Remove the strainer if there is one. Good sampling points are frequently in the bathroom sink or tub. An outside spigot is also fine if it is clear of contamination by dirt. The kitchen faucet is usually considered a poor sampling point. **Do not sample through a hose or a frost-free hydrant.**
4. Let the water run for five (5) minutes before collecting the sample.
5. Keep the sample cold (refrigerate or use a cooler) and bring it to the laboratory the same day it is drawn. Analysis must begin at the lab within 24(twenty-four) hours after sample collection for the test to be valid.