



What's In My Water?

Alloway suggests having your private well water tested for coliform bacteria, nitrate-nitrite, and lead by an Ohio EPA-certified laboratory. Although this list is not comprehensive and analysis does not guarantee your water is safe, these three contaminants can provide valuable information about the quality of your water. These inexpensive tests are a good starting point. If you have questions about the aesthetics of your water, such as taste, odor, or color, contact a water-conditioning company.

	Coliform Bacteria	Nitrate-Nitrite	Lead
What is it?	Microorganisms that occur naturally in the intestines of mammals.	Organic forms of nitrogen that occur naturally as part of the nitrogen gas cycle.	A toxic metal that was once commonly found in many products.
Where does it come from?	Coliform bacteria are not typically present in groundwater, so their existence suggests contamination.	Agricultural fertilizers, atmospheric deposition, animal waste, fossil fuels, and industrial discharge. Plants absorb the majority of nitrates, but nitrates can escape during harvest and run into water sources where they dissolve easily.	Plumbing with lead solder. Leaching into groundwater from a landfill or disposal site.
Health effects?	While generally not pathogenic, coliform bacteria indicate conditions in which other harmful viruses or bacteria may exist.	Too much nitrate in drinking water can cause Methemoglobinemia (commonly known as Blue Baby Syndrome) in infants.	In children, lead poisoning can damage the brain and nervous system and lead to behavioral, growth, and hearing problems. Lead is also toxic to adults and can cause serious health problems.
How often do I need to test?	At least once per year. If you suspect contamination, or you notice changes in the color, odor, or taste of your drinking water, a coliform bacteria test should be performed.	At least once per year. Consider more frequent testing if you live in an agricultural area, or if you suspect your well is contaminated.	If you live near a landfill or you suspect lead in your water, you should request a test. If your home has lead pipes, you should have your water tested.
How do I sample?	You may collect the sample. Pick up instructions and a sterile container with a de-chlorinating agent from the testing facility.	You may collect the sample. Pick up a container and instructions from the testing facility.	You may collect the sample. Pick up a container and instructions from the testing facility.
What do the results mean?	The acceptable limit is 0 coliforms per 100 mL. A positive result means that coliform bacteria were detected in your sample. Either the sampling procedure was not performed correctly, or the well is indeed contaminated. Review the procedure for possible errors. If the result is still positive, contact your local Health Department for an approved treatment procedure.	The EPA has set a maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 mg/L for nitrate as nitrogen, and a MCL of 1 mg/L for nitrite as nitrogen in drinking water. High levels of nitrate and nitrite can indicate that other pollutants, particularly herbicides and pesticides, are in the water.	According to the EPA, the action level for lead is 15 ug/L or 15 ppb. If your water has high lead levels, you should consider having young children's blood levels tested by a physician.

List of additional well analytes: <http://epa.ohio.gov/portals/28/documents/pws/CompleteWellAnalysis.pdf>



Contact Alloway for Test Prices

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