

FACTS

INTERPRETATION OF WATER SAMPLE TESTS

Private citizens may submit drinking water samples from home well water for bacteriological analysis. Containers supplied by the Ontario Ministry of Health, Laboratories Branch must be used and are available from any office of the Grey Bruce Health Unit.

Samples are not to be submitted from untreated surface water supplies such as lakes or rivers as these supplies are subject to intermittent contamination and are therefore not considered suitable for drinking purposes unless fully treated.

Questions concerning the interpretation of the results and corrective actions should be directed to your area public health inspector.

Analysis	Acceptable Limits	Interpretation
Total Coliforms per 100 ml of water	1 to 5	The presence of coliforms may be indicative of a contaminated water supply. Coliforms occur naturally in soil and decaying vegetation, but may also be associated with human or animal faecal contamination. Low levels of coliforms bacteria (1 to 5) may be tolerated in a private water supply provided at least 3 repeat samples have been taken over a six week period; the system is secure and not subject to contamination from other sources, and an attempt has been made to disinfect the distribution lines.
	6 or more	The persistent detection of more than 5 coliform bacteria from any drinking water system indicates an unsafe condition.
E.coli per 100 ml of water	0	Acceptable provided total coliforms are satisfactory (see above)
	1 or more	Water is considered unsafe for drinking if any E.coli bacteria are present. E.coli usually indicates faecal contamination from a human or animal source.