



Bacteria Sampling Technique

How to Take a Sample for Total Coliform, Fecal Coliform, and/or *E. coli* Testing

Please fill bottle to top of yellow sticker

Do not overfill--we need enough airspace to shake contents well.

How quickly we need the sample back:

- 6 hours after sampling (wastewater)
- 24 hours after sampling (drinking water, groundwater)

1) KEEP IT CLEAN!

- Wash your hands before starting.
- Do not expose the bottle or bottle cap to any germs or dirt before taking the water sample. For example, keep the cap on the bottle until it's time to sample, don't touch the inside of the bottle or cap with your fingers, don't put cap face down on a surface or in a pocket, etc.
- If you drop the cap in the sink or on the floor, discard the whole bottle. Request a new one.

2) CLEAN THE FAUCET AND RUN WATER FOR 5 MINUTES

- Select a clean faucet and remove any screens, hoses, or aerators. Avoid plastic, swing and goose-neck faucets.
- Optional but recommended: disinfect the end of the faucet by dipping the end in a capful of bleach or alcohol before turning on the water.
- Run COLD water for at least 5 minutes to make sure you are sampling fresh water from your water source and not water that has been sitting in the house pipes.
- Turn down water flow so it doesn't splash and isn't full of air bubbles.

3) TAKE SAMPLE

- DO NOT RINSE SAMPLE BOTTLE: Your bottle may have a white powder or droplets in it (it is sodium thiosulphate—it neutralizes chlorine). If your water source is chlorinated, the white powder or drops will neutralize the chlorine, so do not rinse out the bottle before sampling! If your water source is not chlorinated, you don't need the neutralizer, but it doesn't do any harm, so just leave it where it is.
- Remove seal from bottle and uncap. Fill to the top of the yellow "Fill to Here" sticker. **Leave some air space in bottle so we can shake it well!**
- Screw cap on tightly. Chill sample and keep out of direct sunlight until you can get it to us.

4) RETURN SAMPLE TO US

- Fill out the enclosed "Chain of Custody" form and return sample to lab as soon as possible. We must start drinking water analyses within 30 hours of your taking the sample.
- Shipping tips: By U. S. Mail: The U. S. Mail *may or may not* be able to deliver your sample to us in 24 hours. Call your local post office to discuss your situation. Ask what time of day they ship out packages and try to time your sampling such that you can take the sample and deliver it to the post office shortly before they ship. FedEx or UPS can deliver overnight in many cases.
- Bacteria samples are accepted at the lab on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. **If your sample arrives on Friday or Saturday, we cannot accept it.** Time your shipping accordingly!