

## 'Shocking your Well or Cistern'

1. Determine the depth of the water level in the well.
2. Using the table below, determine the volume per lineal foot, based on well diameter.
3. Multiply water depth by Volume per Lineal Foot, then divide by 1000 to determine the gallons of bleach required. For ounces, multiply the gallons by 128.
4. Introduce the bleach to the well.
5. Recirculate the water in the well to mix the bleach.
6. Turn on all faucets until you can smell bleach, then turn them off and don't use them for 24 hours.
7. After the system sits, turn the faucets back on and let water run until the bleach odor can no longer be detected.

**Water Volume Table**

Well Diameter (inches)	Volume per Lineal Foot (gallons)
4	.7
6	1.5
8	2.6
12	5.9
24	23
36	52
48	94
60	147
72	211

### REMEMBER

Look for any source of contamination. An easy method to evaluate your system is to start at the point of collection and work back, looking for sources of contamination. Examine the faucet, making sure the screen was removed and the faucet was allowed to run for several minutes prior to sampling. Following the water supply backwards, look for potential cross contamination. The well head should be intact, not allowing contamination to enter your well casing.

### Common Collection Errors

- not collecting the water directly from the faucet or spigot (either using a hose or transferring water from a primary collection container)
- not letting the water run prior to sampling
- touching the inside cap or bottle while collecting the sample

### For More Information

WA Department of Health Coliform Information

[www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/Programs/coliform.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/Programs/coliform.htm)

New Hampshire Disinfecting a Private Well information

[www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/ws/ws-4-11.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/ws/ws-4-11.htm)

Department of Community Development

Phone: 360-875-9356 or 360-642-9382

[www.co.pacific.wa.us](http://www.co.pacific.wa.us)

## Positive Total Coliforms



### Pacific County

### Water Quality Laboratory

### Department of Community Development

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# Positive Total Coliforms

## Coliforms

### What are they?

Coliforms are naturally occurring bacteria found in soil, surface water, sewage and warm blooded animal waste. Coliforms are used to evaluate the quality of drinking water and indicate the potential presence of disease-producing organisms. Coliforms should not be present in your well water.

### What does it mean?

Coliform bacteria do not necessarily cause disease. A positive coliform test suggests a problem with the water supply or with the pipes carrying the water to the consumer.

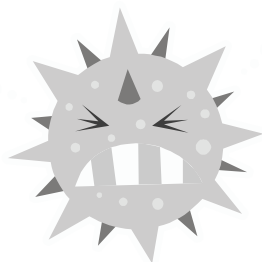
### How does this happen?

You have a source of contamination reaching your water system. Possible sources include soil, decaying matter, and warm blooded animals. Potential causes could be from a poorly constructed well, a failed septic system close to your wellhead, a rodent infestation near the well head, or even a cross connection.

## E. coli positive

If the water sample is positive for total coliforms, it will then be tested for the presence of E. coli.

E. coli is a sub-group of the coliform family. Most E. coli bacteria are harmless and are found in great quantities in the intestines of people and warm-blooded animals. Some strains, however, can cause illness. The presence of E. coli in a drinking water sample almost always indicates recent fecal contamination – meaning there is a greater risk that pathogens are present.



### Note:

The coliform test is very sensitive to contamination. A dirty faucet, accidentally touching the interior of the bottle during sampling, or sampling from a hose can all give a positive coliform result. Be sure to carefully follow the collection procedures included with the sample bottle.

## Corrective Actions

1. Use another source of water for consumption until the system is fixed and samples test negative for coliforms.
2. Look for evidence of a failed system, standing water or animal access in the vicinity of your well head and correct any problems located. Start troubleshooting at the faucet and work backwards toward the well head.
3. Disinfect the well before usage. The well decontamination process is located on the back page. Disinfect even if no problem is found.
4. Retest the well water five to seven days after disinfection

### REMEMBER:

Disinfection may only be a temporary fix if the problem is not identified and corrected.

