What Happens When a Water Test Is Negative?

Understanding the Results of Your Coliform Bacteria Test

As you know, we recently performed a total coliform bacteria test on your water. The results have come back **NEGATIVE**.

What does a negative test result mean?

The lack of total coliform bacteria in your water does not necessarily indicate that your water is not contaminated; it only means that at the time of testing, there were no signs of external influence on your water. Water quality changes over time. Precipitation, such as snowmelt and heavy downpours, and seasonal changes are two common influences that can cause these microorganisms to infiltrate your water. Your best course of action is to continue to test for microbes at least once a year, preferably in the spring and fall. However, the more you test, the more confident you can be in your water quality.

What should you do?

Since there was no indication of external influence on your water, you can continue to use your water normally. Going forward, you have a few things to consider. We are happy to answer any questions about these options and help you choose the right path.

1. **Consider testing seasonally.** If your test was drawn in the winter and the region in which you reside frequently sees temperatures below 60°F, schedule to test your well again in the spring. Late April to early June is ideal, as this is the time of year in which you are most likely to have external influences on your water. Fall is also another opportune time for indicator testing.
2. **Maintain a testing schedule.** Regular testing is the single most effective way to understand the potential risk that an infectious microorganism might exist in your well. We can perform these tests for you regularly to help you monitor your well at least once a year or more often if desired.
3. **Consider a continuous treatment system.** Testing water for indicators provides a snapshot of your water quality at a point in time. The result does not tell you if your water is contaminated or not contaminated, but rather that you have “less risk” or “more risk.” To help you manage that risk, you may want to think about installing a method of continuous treatment.

   Many highly effective treatment technologies are available for managing microbial contamination in water—some physical and some chemical. Ultraviolet light is the most common physical treatment method, and chlorine injection is the most common chemical approach. Each one has advantages and disadvantages. We can help you determine the option that is best suited to your water, your family, and your budget.

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