



# It's Time to Make Presence-Absence Microbial Testing a Standard Process

What your customers can't see could be making them sick

According to the United States Geological Survey, one-third of private wells across the country were found to have coliform bacteria.<sup>1</sup> These microbial contaminants can't be seen, smelled, or tasted, so far too often, people don't know these contaminants exist in their well water until someone gets sick.

These waterborne illnesses put unnecessary strain on our healthcare system—not to mention, they impact the quality of your customers' lives. To prevent people from drinking unsafe water, public health agencies in the U.S. and Canada recommend testing private water sources, including private and shared wells, at least once a year.

But most well owners don't follow these recommendations, testing only for an administrative requirement like a real estate transaction or for insurance purposes. This puts them and their family at risk.

Fortunately, you have the power to make a difference.

## Four reasons why you should always test for biological indicators

1

### Testing is the right thing to do for your customers.

They should know if there's something in their water that could make them sick or if they're at risk for potential contamination.

2

### Testing is easy.

Presence-absence tests indicate general water quality and whether potentially harmful fecal organisms could be present in your customers' water—in just 48 hours.

3

### Testing is recommended.

Public health agencies recommend annual testing for bacteria and nitrates.

4

### Testing creates sales leads for your business.

When tests yield positive results, you can follow up to recommend and sell continuous water treatment solutions, like a whole-home UV system.

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Geological Survey. "Quality of Water from Domestic Wells in Principal Aquifers of the United States, 1991-2004: Overview of Major Findings." May 2009.

## Testing pinpoints risk

Well water testing for bacteria and nitrates should happen at least annually; however, given the likelihood of seasonal fluctuations and suddenly occurring weather events, land use changes, or unexplained illnesses, more frequent testing provides greater peace of mind. The more often a source is tested, the more likely total coliforms will be detected.

## Microbial testing is quick, easy, and inexpensive

Through a simple method called the presence-absence test, you can quickly identify whether total coliforms are present in your customers' well water—every time you make a service call. These indicator organisms are used to identify potential contamination or external influence in water sources. Here's how it works:



Water that turns yellow indicates a **positive test** (coliforms present), suggesting the increased probability of contamination by pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, and microbial cysts. *Action should be taken immediately.*



Water that turns purple indicates a **negative test** (coliform absent) but is not a guarantee that pathogens are absent. Establish a program to ensure testing occurs at least one a year, preferably in the warmer months.

Through regular water testing, you can identify the water treatment approach that will enable your customers to prioritize better water quality. Testing gives you the insight you need to foster conversations that go beyond the aesthetics to a topic that is far more meaningful: their health.

## Build your testing program with help from VIQUA

Establishing a testing program is easy and inexpensive. It's also the right thing to do for your customers and your business. If you're committed to making microbial testing part of your business, VIQUA will help you get started. As part of our Certified Partner Program, we provide dealers who want to use well water testing to create awareness for well water quality with:

- Unlimited access to presence-absence test kits at no charge
- An incubator so you can process the tests yourself without going to a lab
- Cobranded, customer-facing materials that explain test results and implications

### Together, let's address this important public health issue—one customer at a time

Become a VIQUA Certified Partner and help us make microbial testing as commonplace as tests for iron, hardness, and total dissolved solids. In so doing, we can substantially increase the rate of testing on private wells and prevent people from drinking untreated well water.

Learn more about the VIQUA Certified Partner Program and sign up today at [www.viqua.com/dealers/certified-partner-program](http://www.viqua.com/dealers/certified-partner-program).