

Shock Chlorination After A Positive Bacteria Test

My well water tested positive for coliform bacteria. Now what do I do?

There are three things you need to do:

1. **Search for and try to correct all sources of pollution.** Common sources of pollution include failing septic systems, unsealed, abandoned wells or influxes of runoff due to a faulty casing. Contamination can also occur during routine maintenance but this is easily remedied by shock chlorination.
2. **Shock chlorinate your well.**
The general rule is 1 cup of bleach per 100 gallons of water to be treated. **Simply use 2 quarts of bleach for wells with up to 100 feet of water and one gallon of bleach for those with over 100 feet of water.** Pour the bleach into the well while pumping. Circulate the solution until a strong chlorine odor is observed at all taps, close taps and stop pump. Allow well to stand at least 8 hours (preferably 12-24). After 8 hours, open all the taps and flush the system thoroughly until chlorine taste and odor dissipates. (Chlorine may persist 7-10 days)
3. **Resample the well 2-3 weeks after you shock chlorinate.**
If the test results still indicate the presence of greater than 1 coliform colony per 100 ml of water then there is still a pollution source contaminating your well. If you can not locate the pollution source you should install a water treatment device that provides continuous disinfection. If the test results come back normal, then sit tight.
4. **Repeat testing in 2-3 months.**
If two tests in a row come back normal, then you can rest assured that the problem has been fixed.



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