



GEAUGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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TOTAL COLIFORM BACTERIA SAMPLE INFORMATION

1. Purchase a sanitized bottle.
 - a. Sanitized collection bottles may be purchased during normal business hours.
 - b. Samples must be collected in the sanitized bottles supplied by GCDWR. There are **NO** exceptions.
 - c. There are no refunds on Total Coliform Bacteria testing due to use of sanitized bottles.
2. Collect a water sample: See instructions on back
3. Drop off a collected sample.
 - a. Samples are accepted Monday thru Wednesday only, during normal business hours.
 - b. Samples **must be returned within 12 hours** of water being drawn in order to result in an accurate test. The fresher the better.
 - c. The Bacterial sample report form must be completed in order for the sample to be tested. Samples accompanied by illegible, inaccurate or incomplete forms will be rejected.
4. Getting the results.
 - a. If the results are POSITIVE for the total coliform bacteria, we will notify you approximately 24-48 hours after you dropped the sample off, via the phone number or email provided on submitted report.
 - b. If the results are NEGATIVE, the results will be mailed or emailed to the address provided on submitted report.
 - c. If you prefer the lab call with negative results, an additional \$2.00 payment can be made at the time of purchase or drop off.
 - d. There are many cases where a sample must be confirmed – this procedure can take an additional 96 hours. You will be notified if this procedure must happen to your sample.

COLLECTION PROCEDURE

1. Selecting the Tap
 - a. A faucet, small valve or a petcock is preferable.
 - b. **DO NOT select a tap with an obvious leak around the faucet stem.**
 - c. **DO NOT select a tap with a swivel joint or kitchen faucet sprayer.**
 - d. Aerated or screened nozzles may harbor bacteria. **The aerator screen must be removed before the sample is collected.**
 - e. Hoses or drinking fountains are **NOT** acceptable.
 - f. We recommend placing all carbon filters, sediment filters and water softeners on bypass.
2. Sanitize the Nozzle of the Tap:

Use a 5.25% sodium hypochlorite solution such as Clorox Bleach or any other household chlorine bleach. **DO NOT USE BLEACH WITH AT SPECIAL SCENT.**

 - a. Make a solution from **1 tablespoon bleach to ½ gallon of water** (stronger solutions can be made but they may cause some faucet discolorations) and pour into a spray bottle or zip lock bag
 - b. Open the cold water faucet and run the water for one minute then close the faucet.
 - c. Apply the sanitizing solution.
 - i. Spray Bottle – Saturate the tap opening with the solution making sure to get the outside as well as the inside. Wait at least 2 minutes before proceeding. Note: This solution can be stored up to 6 months.
 - ii. **Plastic Ziploc Bag** – Place the Ziploc bag over the nozzle so the top of the bag is above the opening. Alternately squeeze and release the bag to flush the solution in and out of the tap. Do this for 2 minutes. Note: A fresh solution must be used for each tap when using this method.
 - d. **Flush the tap for 3-5 minutes** to allow for adequate flushing of the piping.
3. Collect the Water
 - a. Reduce the rate of flow to avoid splashing when filling the collection bottle.
 - b. Remove the cap from the sample bottle by holding the exterior **ONLY**. Take care not to touch the threads or any part of the rim or interior of the bottle or cap.
 - c. **DO NOT OVERFLOW, but FILL THE BOTTLE TO THE TOP**
 - d. Immediately recap the sample bottle tightly, taking care not to touch the inside with fingers.
 - e. If there is any question as to whether a sample or bottle has become contaminated during collection, the sample must be discarded and a new sample collected in a **NEW SANITIZED BOTTLE.**
4. Complete the bacterial sample report form and attach to the bottle.
5. Return the bottle and form to the Water Resources Office **within 12 hours of collection.**