

Sampling Drinking Water

1. Obtain a 200 ml. water sample bottle from either the Public Health Laboratory at 181 Barrie Street, Kingston, or your local KFL&A Public Health office.
2. Before taking the water sample remove any aerators, screens, or hoses from tap. Clean tap with alcohol or bleach.
3. Run the cold water for approximately 2 to 3 minutes. Fill the sample bottle to the line shown on the bottle.
4. Fill out the data sheet that came with the bottle. A postage stamp is not required.
5. Return the bottle and data sheet to the Public Health Laboratory at 181 Barrie Street, Kingston, 613-548-6630. You can also drop off your sample at any KFL&A Public Health location for delivery to the Public Health Laboratory.

Kingston: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Friday 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Sharbot Lake: Tuesday mornings only, 8:30 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

Cloyne: Wednesday mornings only, before 11:00 a.m.

Napanee: Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before noon.

6. The sample must be in the Public Health Laboratory within forty-eight (48) hours from the time it was taken. If you are not able to take the sample to KFL&A Public Health or the Public Health Laboratory the same day as it was taken, refrigerate the sample overnight.

Guide for Sampling Your Well

It is recommended that you sample:

1. in the spring (after spring runoff),
2. mid-June, and
3. mid-August (when water level is at its lowest).

If the test result is not satisfactory, boil or disinfect the water before using and resample the water from the tap. Contact KFL&A Public Health for directions on how to disinfect the well and to discuss alternatives.

The interpretation of the results are on the front of the paper returned to you from the Public Health Laboratory. If you have any questions, please contact the nearest office of KFL&A Public Health.

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Kingston
221 Portsmouth Avenue
Kingston, ON K7M 1V5
Tel: 613-549-1232
1-800-267-7875
Fax: 613-549-7896

Cloyne
P.O. Box 59
14209 Highway 41
Cloyne, ON K0H 1K0
Tel: 613-336-8989
Fax: 613-336-0522

Napanee
41 Dundas Street
Napanee, ON
K7R 1Z5
Tel: 613-354-3357
Fax: 354-6267

Sharbot Lake
P.O. Box 149
1130 Elizabeth Street
Sharbot Lake, ON K0H 2P0
Tel: 613-279-2151
Fax: 613-279-3997

How To Interpret Your Laboratory Results

Total Coliforms:

- This group of bacteria is always present in animal wastes and sewage, but are also found in soil and on vegetation.
- The presence of these bacteria in your well is usually the result of soil run-off or septic tank seepage.

Escherichia Coli (E. coli):

- These bacteria are only found in the stomachs of people and animals.
- The presence of E. coli bacteria in your well is usually the result of recent sewage contamination from a nearby source.
- These bacteria are the ones that may cause disease.

Interpretation of laboratory results:

TOTAL COLIFORMS	E. COLI	WHAT IT MEANS
0	0	Safe for drinking. Repeat samples may not show exactly the same results because bacteria are not distributed uniformly in water, contamination tends to enter intermittently and numbers can change during sample transit time.
1 → 5	0	Doubtful for a single sample, but safe for drinking if condition remains stable based on three samples.
6 → >80	0	Unsafe for drinking. Contamination is not likely to be of sewage origin unless far removed from the water source or unless there has been a delay in receipt of sample. Common with new wells before disinfection and shallow dug wells which are not properly sealed.
1 → >80	1 → 60	Unsafe for drinking. Pollution source may be some distance from the water source, or diluted with large volumes of pure water, or the sample may not have been received within 48 hours of being taken. Samples older than 48 hours cannot provide reliable results.
>80	>60	Unsafe for drinking. This water is contaminated and should not be used for drinking under any circumstances. <i>Do not attempt to apply these standards and interpretations to surface waters used for swimming.</i>
EST		Unsafe for drinking. Number has been estimated due to some interference with the test. Exact number is not really critical, especially if in excess of limits shown above, for judging safety.
O/G		Doubtful condition and not recommended for drinking. No coliform bacteria could be detected because of “overgrowth” by other bacteria. This condition frequently occurs with new wells, dug wells receiving soil drainage, or wells which have been idle for some time. Collect another sample and identify clearly “REPEAT SAMPLE”.