

## TEST EXPLANATIONS for TOTAL COLIFORM & *E. coli*

Results are expressed as positive or negative for coliform bacteria in 100 milliliters of a water sample. Total coliform bacteria can occur in the intestines of humans and animals. They also may occur in soil and plant life. Total coliform bacteria can occur in a water sample due to poor sampling procedure. *E. coli* is bacteria that occurs in the intestines of humans and animals. It is a direct indicator of contamination from waste and sewage. Therefore, coliforms are indicators of outside pollution of a water source. A result of positive in either the Total coliform or *E. coli* test indicates the water could be contaminated and the sample is not acceptable.

Please note: This test is for bacterial analysis ONLY and not for chemicals or minerals. The bacterial test results are indicative of the water quality of the sample received at the laboratory at the time of sampling ONLY. These tests cannot tell what the water quality was prior to sampling nor can it predict what the future quality of the water will be.

If you need additional information for your water well, or have questions about your water quality, please contact your local health department. Additional information is available from the New York State Department of Health regarding standards for water wells at [https://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/nycrr/title\\_10/part\\_5/appendix\\_5b.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/nycrr/title_10/part_5/appendix_5b.htm). Additionally, fact sheets related to water well drilling, operation, testing, and protection can be found at and [https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/regulations/fact\\_sheets/](https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/regulations/fact_sheets/), including:

- [Use of "Additional Measures" in Water Well Siting and Construction](#)
- [Water Storage](#)
- [Recommended Residential Water Quality Testing](#)
- [Decommissioning Abandoned Wells](#)
- [Susceptible Water Sources](#)
- [Guidance for Code Enforcement Officials](#)
- [Testing, Operation, and Maintenance of Residential Wells](#)