

Consumer Notice

TOTAL COLIFORM BACTERIA IN A NONCOMMUNITY DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

Routine water monitoring has detected total coliform bacteria in our drinking water supply. As a consumer you have a right to know what this means, what you should do, and what is being done to correct the situation. This notice is to inform you of the situation and allow you to take actions that you feel appropriate.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. The regulations governing public water systems require that our water supply be routinely tested for total coliform bacteria. The most recent testing found these bacteria in our drinking water system. Total coliform bacteria should not be in the water and their presence indicates a potential pathway for contamination to enter the drinking water. Total coliform bacteria are generally not harmful themselves and are naturally present in the environment. They are used as an indicator that other potentially harmful organisms including bacteria and viruses may be present. *E. coli* bacteria, a group of potentially harmful bacteria, were also tested for and were **not** detected in our water supply.

What Should I Do?

You may drink the water. However, if you have specific health concerns, you may want to consider seeking an alternate source of water. The immunocompromised, the elderly, pregnant women, and children may be at increased risk if potentially harmful waterborne pathogens are present in the water supply.

If the water system is being treated with high levels of chlorine (i.e. shock chlorination), you will be notified to avoid using the water for any purpose until the chlorine levels in the water are determined to be safe.

What is Being Done?

We are working with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) or local health agency to investigate the potential cause for the presence of total coliform bacteria in our water supply. This includes evaluating the entire drinking water system to determine what may have allowed the entry of contaminants and correcting any problems identified during the investigation. The system will be disinfected and/or flushed, followed by additional testing. We will continue to work with MDH or the local health agency until this situation is resolved.

Where Is More Information Available?

You may contact _____ at _____ for further information.

For more information about total coliforms:

[Coliform Bacteria in Drinking Water](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/contaminants/coliformbacteria.pdf)

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Instructions for Consumer Notice for Total Coliform Bacteria

When do I use this notice?

This public notice is to be used when the presence of total coliform bacteria has been confirmed in the water supply. This notice must **not** be used when *E. coli* has been detected.

How do I use this notice?

The notice should be completed by providing the name/phone number of a contact person at the public water system. Copies of the notice must then be conspicuously placed in all locations where people could obtain drinking water from the water supply.

In addition, food and beverage establishments should provide notice at their entry area(s). Lodging establishments should provide notice at check-in.

How long must I post the notice?

Notice(s) must remain in place until sampling confirms that the total coliform bacteria are no longer present in the water system. You will be informed by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) or your local health agency when the notices may be removed.

Am I required to post this notice?

Yes. MDH requires that this notice be posted when total coliform bacteria are detected in noncommunity public water systems. Changes in the content of this notice must not be made without the consent of MDH or your local health agency.

Am I required to provide an alternate source of water?

No, it is not required that you provide an alternate source of water to consumers. However, MDH **strongly encourages** you to provide commercially bottled water for drinking until your water supply tests absent for total coliform bacteria.

In addition, it is recommended that food, beverage, and lodging establishments use commercially bottled water, or tap water boiled for at least one minute, for all food preparation. The use of commercial ice, prewashed and packaged fruits and vegetables, and bottled or canned beverages is also recommended.

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4700. Printed on recycled paper.