



Well Disinfection for Bacterial Contamination

If water from a well is found to be contaminated with coliform bacteria, it may be possible to eliminate the contamination by disinfecting the well. If the well is improperly constructed or poorly located, contamination may not be eliminated or may be only temporarily eliminated. In that case, a permanent disinfection system or a new well may be necessary. Well water systems may be disinfected by adding chlorine bleach (Clorox, Purex, etc.) to the water in the well. Use the following dosages as a guide:

Well Casing Diameter	Amount of 5.25% (Household) Chlorine Bleach Needed
4 inches	Two and one-half (2½) cups
6 inches	Five (5) cups
8 inches	Seven and one-half (7½) cups
12 inches	Twenty (20) cups OR One and one-quarter (1¼) gallons

NOTE: These quantities are for 100 feet of well depth. Adjust the quantities to fit the depth of your well. Use only unscented bleach.

- ♦ If the water is cloudy, attempt to clear as much as possible by pumping the well to waste. With the pump NOT operating, add the chlorine.
- ♦ Once the chlorine has been added to the well, open all faucets until you smell chlorine at the tap farthest from the well.
- ♦ Close the faucets and allow the mixture to stand in the system for 24 hours, or at least overnight. Disinfectant contact time with bacteria is important.
- ♦ After contact time is accomplished, flush the chlorine mixture from the system by hooking a garden hose to an outside tap and running until no chlorine odor is present. Do not flush the mixture into your septic system **by running chlorinated water down drains!!** Your septic system was not designed to handle the large continuous flow of water necessary to remove the chlorine and chlorine is harmful to the beneficial bacteria that make your septic tank function properly. Since chlorine will kill grass and plants, be careful where you run the water outside.
- ♦ When you can no longer smell chlorine in the water, close all taps and faucets and use the system normally.
- ♦ After at least one week, you should have your water retested for the presence of bacteria.

Following is a list of laboratories that are certified to test water for bacterial contamination:

Alpha Analytical Laboratories
208 Mason St.
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 468-0401

Brelje & Race Laboratories, Inc.
425 South E St.
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
(707) 544-8807

County of Sonoma
Public Health Laboratory
3313 Chanate Rd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
(707) 565-4711

Analytical Sciences
Liberty St.
Petaluma, CA 94952
(707) 769-3128

CalTest Analytical
1885 North Kelly Rd.
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 258-4000