

Which Water Test Do I Need?

The Public Health Laboratory offers water tests for total coliform and *E. coli* bacteria. Here is a list of tests offered and a brief definition of each.

Presence/Absence (SM 9223 Colilert 24H): \$30

This test is used only for drinking water (potable) samples. This type of test indicates whether total coliform or *E. coli* bacteria are in your water. This test will not give you a count of bacteria in your water. You will receive a report stating total coliform and *E. coli* present or absent.

Enumeration, Quanti-tray 51 (SM 9223 ColilertT 24H): \$35

This test is mainly used for drinking water (potable) samples. This type of test indicates whether total coliform and *E. coli* bacteria are in your water and gives you a most probable number (MPN) count of those bacteria. You will receive a report stating total coliform and *E. coli* present or absent and the MPN of those bacteria in your sample.

Enumeration, Quanti-tray 2000 (SM 9223 Colilert 24H): \$40

This test is primarily used for non-potable water samples which include spring/creek water, recreational water, or any other type of raw surface water. Quanti-tray 2000 indicates whether total coliform and *E. coli* bacteria are in your water and gives you a MPN count of those bacteria, but has a higher endpoint than Quanti-tray 51. A higher endpoint means that this test can count a higher number of bacteria than Quanti-tray 51, if they are present. **This test is more suitable for types of water that typically have higher counts of bacteria.** You will receive a report stating total coliform and *E. coli* present or absent and the MPN of those bacteria in your sample.

Enumeration, Enterolert (SM 9223 Enterolert 24H): \$40

This test is used for fresh or marine raw surface water. Enterolert indicates the presence or absence of Enterococci bacteria, such as *E. faecium* and *E. faecalis*. You will receive a report stating Enterococci present or absent and the MPN of those bacteria in your sample.

- **What are coliform bacteria?** Coliform bacteria are found in many natural settings, including plants and soil. One very common coliform bacteria, *E. coli*, is found in warm-blooded animals. It is used worldwide as a measure of disease potential in water. The test used here distinguishes between the different types of coliform bacteria present in the sample: soil and plants (total coliform) vs. *E. coli* from mammals.
- **What is raw surface water?** Raw surface water is any type of untreated water that is open to the environment such as spring, creek or river water.
- **What is an endpoint?** An endpoint is the highest amount of bacteria that can be counted by that specific test. Some tests can count higher than others. For example, drinking water does not need a count as high as wastewater does.

Remember: According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the presence of any coliform bacteria renders water unsuitable for drinking.

