

### Well Water Screening for Bacteria and Nitrates

To schedule a water screening appointment, call Environmental Health staff at 843-3060. Environmental Health staff collect samples of home well water by appointment during regular office hours, Monday through Thursday. Bacteria screening results are available the following day. If nitrates are detected, a sample will be sent to the Kansas Division of Health & Environmental Laboratories in Topeka to determine the nitrate concentration.

**Coliform Bacteria**      The presence of coliform bacteria in well water indicates that a source of bacterial contamination exists, and therefore it is possible for disease-causing organisms to be present. Water containing coliform bacteria should be considered unsafe for consumption. Bottled water should be used for drinking and cooking until the well system can be disinfected and shown to be bacteria-free by re-screening.

**Nitrates**                      Water containing nitrate levels above 10 milligrams per liter (mg/l) should be considered unsafe for use by expectant mothers or infants less than one year old, and another source of water should be used for drinking or making formula. Water exceeding the nitrate standard may also be harmful to young animals and to ruminant animals such as cattle. Boiling does not remove nitrogen from the water. If you have specific questions about nitrate consumption, it is recommended that you consult your physician.

**New Wells**                      Water from new wells should be screened after the well is connected to the house.

**Existing Wells**                It is recommended that water from existing wells be screened for bacteria and nitrates once a year. There is a nominal fee for screening existing wells.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Environmental Health staff are in the office from 8:30 to 9 a.m. and from noon to 1:30 p.m. to receive calls and visitors. Otherwise, we are often out on inspections. If you wish to come in at other times, please call first to confirm that someone can assist you.