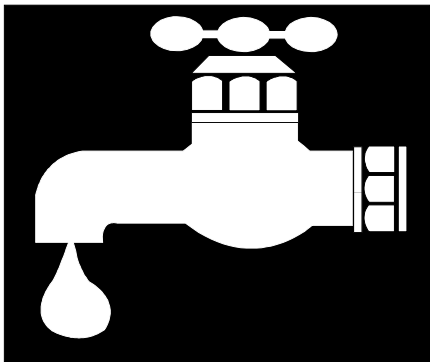


Bacteria

Should I be Worried About Bacteria in My Drinking Water?

- Yes. Certain types of bacteria in your drinking water can make you sick. Bacteria are small single celled organisms that can live on their own. They are neither plants nor animals.
- Most bacteria are not harmful.
- Bacteria that can hurt us are called pathogens.

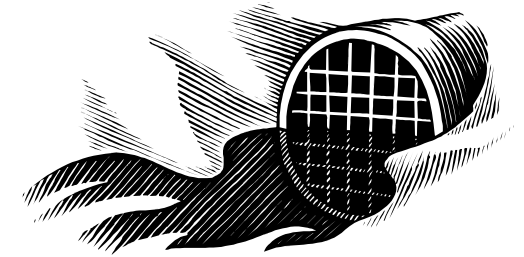


Harmful Bacteria

- Harmful bacteria are dangerous because they can release toxins. When something, such as an antimicrobial, tries to kill some bacteria and they survive, the next generation is more resistant to the killing method.

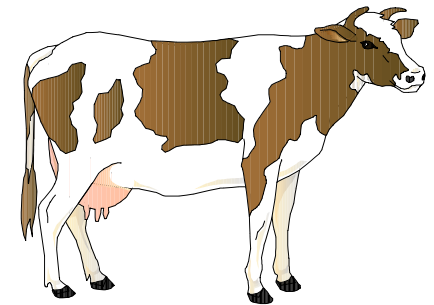
Kinds of Harmful Bacteria

- *Salmonella* can live inside the intestines. It releases toxins that cause cramps and diarrhea.
- *Cholera* causing bacteria interact with the intestinal cell lining. It lets large amounts of fluid flow into the intestines. This causes cramps, diarrhea, and tiredness. People who get cholera can die from dehydration.
- *Shigella* are a group of bacteria. They cause fever, stomach pain, and diarrhea.



How Do These Bacteria Get in the Water?

- One of the most common ways is by passing through a poorly operated or poorly maintained sewage system.
- Bacteria can also come from untreated human and animal waste.



How Can I Protect My Own Water System?

- Don't allow your sewage to go out straight pipes into the yard or creek.
- Make sure your septic system is working properly:
 - Toilets flushing well
 - Sinks draining well
 - No bad odor near drainfield
 - No standing water in drainfield
- Your septic system should not leak. If you have a problem, your septic tank may need to be pumped. Have the septic system checked by an expert each year and pumped every three to five years.
- If you have a well, make sure that it is properly sealed. The well casing should be above the ground level. Wells should be uphill from septic tanks, feedlots, animal pens, and pesticides.
- If you have a cistern, make sure it doesn't leak. It should be located in the right place. *See ENRI-204 publication for more information on cistern location.* Be sure to properly clean and disinfect it regularly.

What Can I Do to Keep the Harmful Bacteria From Affecting My Family's Health

- Make sure everyone washes their hands well with soap and warm water:
 - ▶ Before handling or eating food.
 - ▶ After using the bathroom or changing diapers.
 - ▶ After working or playing outside.
 - ▶ After handling animals or animal waste.
- If a *boil water advisory* is issued in your community, make sure you *boil* all water used for drinking or cooking for *three* minutes at a rolling *boil* or use bottle water.

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Bacteria

Should I Be Worried About Bacteria in My Drinking Water?

How Do the Bacteria Get in the Water?

How Can I Protect My Own Water System?

How Can I Protect My Family from Harmful Bacteria?

