



# Montgomery County Health Department

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Montgomery County  
Health Department**

**110 West South Boulevard  
Crawfordsville, IN 47933**

## Understanding the Results of Your Present/Absent Water Sample

The laboratory results are reported as Coliform Absent or Coliform Present. Absent means that Coliforms WERE NOT present in the sample. Present means that Coliforms WERE present in the sample. E. Coli Absent or E. Coli Present is also reported. If the sample is Absent for Coliform, it will also be Absent for E. Coli.

If Coliforms are present and E. Coli is absent, then the water is considered unsafe and a potential health hazard. When both Coliforms and E. Coli are present, the water is deemed to be an extreme health hazard.

**Total Coliform:** A group of bacteria made up of primarily 18 different bacteria. These bacteria are often found in animal waste and sewage, and soil and vegetation. Coliform bacteria are not harmful in most cases, but if they are in your water supply it is an indicator that other harmful and disease causing bacteria may have also entered your drinking water.

When Coliform bacteria are present in a water supply, it is considered to be a potential health hazard and is classified as unsafe for human consumption.

**E. Coli (Escherichia Coli):** These bacteria are normally found only in the digestive systems of people and animals. If they are in your drinking water, it usually means that animal or human waste is entering your well from nearby source.

If E. Coli is present in your drinking water, it is considered to be an “Extreme Health Hazard.”

If you have a “Present” result from your drinking water sample, sanitizing the well is usually the first step to eliminating it. After the chlorination procedure is done on the system, ensure the system is used for a minimum of 5-7 days to ensure the chlorine has washed through and then retest.