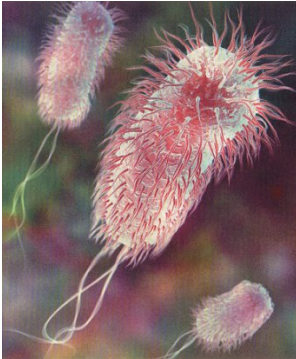




E. coli in Drinking Water

Maine CDC Drinking Water Program • 11 SHS Augusta, ME 04330 • 287-2070 • www.medwp.com



E. coli is a microscopic organism that indicates fecal contamination of drinking water.

What is *E. coli*?

Escherichia coli or *E. coli* is a type fecal coliform bacteria that is commonly found in the intestines of animals and humans. *E. coli* in water is a strong indicator of sewage or animal waste contamination. Sewage and animal waste can contain many types of disease causing organisms. Consumption may result in severe illness; children under five years of age, those with compromised immune systems, and the elderly are particularly susceptible.

How do I know if my water is safe?

Your public water system is required by law to notify you if your water is not safe. If your public water system believes that your drinking water may contain *E. coli* they will contact you as soon as possible.

What do I do if I have been notified that my drinking water is *E. coli* positive?

There are a number of precautions you can take to ensure your water is safe to use and drink.

Drinking Water

- Boil water for at least one minute before drinking or use bottled water.

Food preparation

- Wash fruits and vegetables with boiled or bottled water.
- Use boiled water or bottled water for infant formula.
- Use boiled or bottled water to make beverages such as coffee, tea, or juice.



Washing Dishes

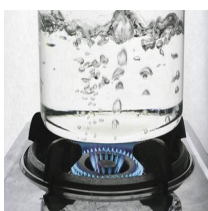
- Wash and rinse dishes with boiled or bottled water. Not all dishwashers will remove *E. coli* contamination; if you use a dishwasher it must reach a temperature of 160° F.
- A chlorine bleach solution can be used to disinfect dishes. Use one teaspoon unscented chlorine bleach for every gallon of water.

Bathing and Showering

- Adults may continue to shower, exercising caution to ensure no water is swallowed.
- Sponge baths are recommended for children. If possible, use a clean supply of water for bathing children.
- After bathing, wash hands with boiled or bottled water.

Brushing Teeth

- Use boiled or bottled water to brush teeth.



Boiled water means the water has remained at a rolling boil for at least one minute. Boiled water should be cooled before use.

If you have any questions, contact your public water system or call the Drinking Water Program at 287-2070.

Additional information on *E. coli* can be found at the Environmental Protection Agency's website:
www.tinyurl.com/EPAEcoli



Keep Your Drinking Water Safe:

✓ Protect Your Source

✓ Take Your Samples

✓ Maintain Your Treatment

✓ Inspect Your Pipes & Tanks