Water Testing Laboratories

of Maryland, Inc.

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How to Read Your Report

Thank you for choosing Water Testing Labs of MD to test your water supply. Enclosed are the results of your testing. Below is a brief guide to help you interpret your results.

Parameter	**Result**	Units	Report Limit	MCL	Analytical Method
This column contains the names of each chemical/ physical property your water sample was tested for	This column contains the result found when your sample was analyzed	This column tells you the units in which your results are given.	The reporting limit for a given parameter is the lowest standard used to calibrate our equipment.	The MCL is the EPA's Maximum Contaminant Level for a given test. If your result is lower than the MCL, the water is safe. If the result is higher than the MCL, the water may require treatment before it is safe for human consumption. Not all parameters have an MCL.	The analytical method is our laboratory code for the test procedure used to perform your testing.

Commonly Analyzed Parameters

(1) **Total Coliform Bacteria** – Total Coliform Bacteria are large class of generally harmless bacteria. If your water tests positive for coliform bacteria, it is possible that other, more harmful bacteria could also be present in the water supply. We advise that the water system be disinfected prior to any further use after a positive test.

(2) ***E. coli*** – *E. coli* is a bacteria found in human and animal waste. The presence of *e. coli* is cause for concern, as certain strains of the bacteria can be very harmful to humans. We advise that the water system be disinfected immediately if there is a positive result for *e. coli*.

(3) **Nitrates + Nitrites** – Nitrates and nitrites can be naturally occurring, or the result of fertilizer use on land surrounding the well. At very high levels, these compounds can be harmful to infants under six months of age.

(4) **Sand** – When a well is drilled, a strainer is placed at the bottom of the well to prevent any sand or debris from entering the well pump. Any sand in the drinking water is cause for concern because it can damage the well pump and pressure tank in your home water system. The strainer/screen should be replaced to prevent further damage.

(5) **Turbidity** – Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of water. High turbidity levels can indicate the presence of contaminants in the water (especially iron or manganese).

(6) **pH** – The pH scale measures how acidic or basic the water is. The ideal pH for water is 6.5 – 8.5. If the pH is lower than 6.5, the water could cause corrosion in copper pipes.

(7) **Iron** – Iron is commonly found in drinking water. It is a reddish compound that can discolor bathroom fixtures and laundry.

(8) **Hardness** – Hardness is caused by the presence of calcium and magnesium ions in water. It can cause white, scaly deposits on plumbing fixtures and cooking appliances. This buildup can also occur inside water heaters, dishwashers, and washing machines and shorten the life of the appliance.

(9) **Lead** – Lead is a metal that was at one time found in solder used in home plumbing. Lead present at levels higher than the MCL may cause damage to the brain, kidneys, nervous system, and red blood cells after continuous exposure.

(10) **Copper** – In most homes, the water pipes are made of copper. Corrosive water can cause copper to leach into the water, causing blue-green stains on plumbing fixtures and a metallic taste in the water.

(11) **First Draw and Flushed Results** – First draw and flushed samples are most often taken for lead and copper testing, but can be done for other metals testing.

The first draw sample is taken after the water is allowed to sit undisturbed in the pipes for at least six hours. After this period, the sample container is filled with the very first water that comes out of the tap. The results from this sample will let you know if there is any contamination in your water coming from the plumbing or fixtures close to the tap used for testing.

The flushed sample is taken after the water is allowed to run for 5-10 minutes. This will flush out the water that has been sitting in the pipes. The results from this sample will let you know if there is contamination in the water coming from the water source/well.

Information about other contaminants and water quality issues can be found at

http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/