



**WHAT DOES MY BACTERIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WATER MEAN?**

Most bacteriological analysis for drinking water will provide the numbers of Total Viable Bacteria, Total Coliforms and E.coli present in 100 ml of water.

**Total Viable Bacteria** have no direct relation to faecal contamination and are not a health risk, however they provide an indication of general microbiological content of the water. The ADWG does not set a guideline value for Total Viable Bacteria.

**Total Coliforms** refer to a large group of bacteria that can be of faecal or non-faecal origin. Many of the non-faecal organisms grow naturally in the environment, including water. Total Coliforms do not present a direct health risk, but can provide information on the efficiency of drinking water disinfection. The ADWG does not set a guideline value for Total Coliforms.

**E.coli** present in drinking water means that human or animal faeces have contaminated the water. Faeces can harbour a number of other pathogenic, or disease causing, organisms. The guideline value for E.coli, set in the ADWG, to ensure that drinking water is safe to consume is zero.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY DRINKING WATER CONTAINS E.COLI?**

If your drinking water sample is positive for E.coli it is recommended, as a precautionary measure, that water used for drinking and oral hygiene is boiled and cooled prior to use, or that bottled water is used for that purpose, until your drinking water is free of E.coli

Detection of E.coli in your drinking water indicates the water should be treated to ensure it is safe for human consumption. A range of treatment processes are suitable for drinking water, including filtration, UV and chlorine disinfection. For details on the disinfection of water tanks with chlorine see Fact Sheet – *Disinfection of Water Tanks*.

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