

# Drinking Water Sampling Guide

This guide is meant for drinking water samples. For more about livestock, aquaponics, irrigation, wastewater or other testing, please call the laboratory directly or visit our website.

## Important General Sampling Reminders

- Keep sample bottle closed until the moment it is to be filled.
- Do not rinse the container.
- Take care to not touch or contaminate the inner surface of the lid and the neck of the bottle.
- If the sample bottle overflows, discard the container and start over with a new bottle.
- Leave ample air space to facilitate mixing.
- Replace the lid immediately after sample is collected.
- Label the sample bottle right away.
- Include a sample submission form, or Chain of Custody form, with all sample shipments.

## Well Water Sampling

- 1 Collect the sample from a point as close to the well as possible.
- 2 Do not collect a water sample from a point after a water softener.
- 3 If the faucet used has an aerator on it, remove the aerator before taking the sample. Do not take the sample from a swing neck kitchen sink type faucet. Sanitize the faucet with an aseptic wipe or 95% ethyl alcohol solution.
- 4 Turn on the water and let it run for a minimum of 5 minutes before collecting the sample.
- 5 Open the bottle carefully and place it in the slowly flowing water stream and fill it completely.
- 6 Cap the bottle tightly and fill out the information form as completely as you can.
- 7 The sample needs to be received at the lab no later than 30 hours after sampling.

## Lead and Copper Water Sampling

Collect samples from a tap that has not been used for a **minimum of 6 hours**. Because of this requirement, the best time to collect samples is either early in the morning or in the evening upon returning from work. Be sure to use taps that have been in general use by your household for the past few months.

- 1 There must be a minimum of 6 hours during which there is no water used from the tap the sample is taken from and any taps adjacent or close to that tap. The water department recommends that either early mornings or evenings upon returning home are the best sampling times to ensure that the necessary stagnant water conditions exist.
- 2 A kitchen or bathroom cold-water faucet is to be used for sampling. If you have water softeners on your kitchen taps, collect your sample from the bathroom tap that is not attached to a water softener, if possible. Place the opened sample bottle below the faucet and gently open the cold water tap. Fill the sample bottle to the line marked '1,000-mL' and turn off the water.
- 3 Tightly cap the sample bottle and place in the sample kit provided. Please review the sample kit label at this time to ensure that all information contained on the label is correct.
- 4 If any plumbing repairs or replacement has been done in the home since the previous sampling event, note this information on the label as provided. If your sample was collected from a tap with a water softener, please note this as well.
- 5 Results from this monitoring effort will be provided to participating customers when reports are generated for the state. However, if excessive lead and/or copper levels are found, immediate notification will be provided (usually 10 working days from the time of sample collection).

## Bacteria Testing

This sample requires a sterile bottle. Use these instructions for any samples being tested for coliform or bacteria.

- 1 Locate a sample tap near the well, preferably not a swing, leaky or outside faucet. Remove any screens and aerators.
- 2 Properly sterilize the faucet. The tip of a metal faucet can be sterilized by heating with a flame, BUT we recommend sterilizing the tip of all faucets with 95% ethyl alcohol.
- 3 Let water run several minutes. Do not change the flow rate, do not shut the faucet off and do not wipe or wash the faucet.
- 4 Remove the cap from the sample bottle without touching the rim of the bottle or inside of the cap. Place cap on a clean surface such as a clean paper towel.
- 5 Fill bottle leaving at least 1" of space between water and cap. Avoid splashing.
- 6 Keep sample on ice and return to AgSource Laboratories within 30 hours.

## Fluoride and Nitrate Testing

Samples must reach AgSource Laboratories within 48 hours of sampling.

- 1 Bacteria, fluoride and nitrate can be taken from the same bottle (from bacteria bottle) if tests are needed.
- 2 Locate a sample tap that does not leak or is not outside.
- 3 Let water run several minutes.
- 4 Fill bottle leaving at least 1" of space between water and cap.
- 5 Keep sample on ice and return to AgSource Laboratories within 30 hours. Nitrates need to be tested within 48 hours of sampling.

## Metals Testing

This sample requires a sterile bottle.

- 1 Locate a sample tap that does not leak or is not outside.
- 2 Let water run several minutes.
- 3 Fill bottle leaving at least 1" of space between water and cap.
- 4 Metals samples can be stored at room temperature until they arrive at the laboratory.

## Shipping and Submission

- Complete and submit a sample submission form with your water samples.
- Samples should be submitted immediately, or kept cool on ice or in the refrigerator before arriving at AgSource Laboratories.
- Use the water kit box to mail your samples, applying the return address label to the front of the box.

