Common Drinking Water Tests

1. Coliform Bacteria & E. coli – $17

Coliform bacteria are common in soil, vegetation, and surface water. Most coliform do not cause illness, but their presence can be a health concern. The coliform bacteria test indicates the possible presence of disease-causing bacteria from human and animal waste. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, fever, and diarrhea.

2. Nitrate & Nitrite – $15 individually or as combination (one result for both)

Nitrates are commonly found in fertilizers and wastewater. High nitrate levels can cause serious health problems for infants, namely "blue baby" syndrome. Women who are pregnant, or want to be pregnant, are also at risk.

3. Arsenic – $15

Arsenic is a naturally occurring element found in rocks, and can get into the groundwater. Long-term exposure has been linked to skin cancer. High levels of contamination can also cause circulatory, nervous, and digestive system problems. Several counties in Upper Michigan have elevated levels are arsenic.

4. Lead – $15

Lead can be leached into water from older plumbing, solder, and brass fixtures. High levels can cause delays in physical and mental development, and may cause kidney and cardiovascular problems. Lead can be especially dangerous to young children, infants, and fetuses.

5. Copper – $15, or Lead/ Copper combo – $25 (one result for each)

Copper, created by the corrosion of plumbing, can cause gastrointestinal distress. It has also been associated with liver damage and kidney disease. Symptoms include upset stomach, abdominal cramping, diarrhea, and headaches.

6. Fluoride – $25

Water consumed by young children and infants should be tested for fluoride. Sometimes used as an additive, low levels promote strong teeth. High levels can cause bone disease and mottled teeth.

7. Hardness, Sodium & Iron – $15

Hard water comes mostly from dissolved carbonate minerals from soil and rock materials. High hardness can cause scaling of water fixtures and water heaters. Hard water may be beneficial to health; however water low in hardness may be corrosive for plumbing systems.

Sodium is a common salt forming element. Special diets may require water to be low in sodium.

Excess iron can cause staining, turbidity, metallic taste, odor, and iron bacteria growth in the water system. Iron is not considered toxic.

8. Chloride – $15

High levels of chloride indicate contamination by septic systems, road salt, fertilizers, animal waste, and naturally occurring mineral deposits. Chloride is not toxic, but can create a salty taste. It also contributes to dissolved solids. High levels cause corrosion in plumbing to speed up.

9. Sulfates – $15

Sulfates are mineral salts that contain sulfur. There are no long-term health effects from exposure to sulfates. It can affect the taste, give a "rotten egg" odor, and can cause a laxative effect.

10. Water pH – $6

pH is a measure of the acidity and basic properties of your water. It indicates the ability to corrode household plumbing. A pH of 1 is very acid (battery acid), 7 is neutral and 14 is very basic (lye). Water that has a pH less than 7 is often corrosive. The ideal pH range is 7.5-8.3 for drinking water.

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