Total Coliforms vs. E.coli

**Total Coliforms**
- Large group of different types of bacteria.
- They occur naturally in our environment.
- Total Coliforms are not naturally found in groundwater.
- Used as an indicator organism to detect other harmful pathogens in your water system.

**E. coli**
- E. coli is a subgroup of total coliforms.
- Found in the intestines of warm blooded animals.
- Associated with fecal matter.
- Can have dangerous strains such as 0157:H7.

### Health Risks
- Harmful strains of E.coli and other pathogens can cause severe illness, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and gastrointestinal issues.
- Total coliforms are unlikely to cause health issues but can indicate the PRESENCE of other harmful pathogens.

### Possible Sources of Contamination
- Has there been work done on the well or water system?
- Is there a failing septic system within proximity?
- Is there agricultural runoff close by?
- Are there domestic or wild animals in the area?

Coliforms can be colorless, odorless, and tasteless and can infiltrate undetected. Coliforms can only be detected through lab testing.

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**BCRAGD Recommends**

Get your water tested at least once a year, after you have any work or repairs to your well or water systems, and after any major flood event!

** If your water tests positive for E.coli DO NOT DRINK the water until the issue is be resolved.