

# 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.

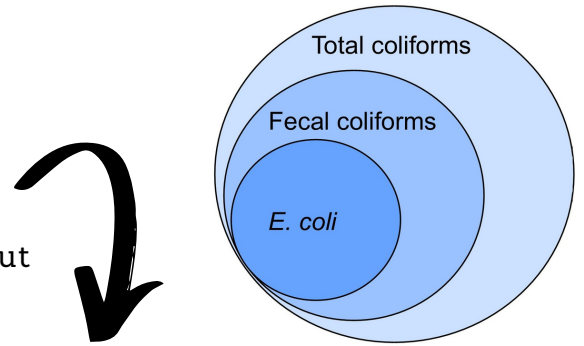
VS.

## 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 O157: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.

## 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 resolved.



**Bandera County**  
River Authority & Groundwater District  
Protecting & Preserving our Natural Resources