



Montana Environmental Laboratory LLC

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“What is in my drinking water?” package

<u>Analyte</u>	<u>Individual Cost</u>
Total Coliform Bacteria	\$ 25.00
Total Nitrates	\$ 22.00
Conductivity	\$ 12.00
pH	\$ 12.00
Arsenic	\$ 15.00
Fluoride	\$ 22.00
Chloride	\$ 22.00
Calcium	\$ 15.00
Magnesium	\$ 15.00
Hardness	\$ 22.00
Nitrate	\$ 22.00
Nitrite	\$ 22.00
Sulfate	\$ 22.00
TOTAL INDIVIDUAL COST	\$248.00
YOUR COST	\$98.00

Note: Two bottles are required for this package. The first is a 1 Liter sample of unsoftened, untreated water. The second sample is a sterile bacteria bottle taken at the kitchen sink. Please refer to the back of the bacteria form for the proper sampling instructions for coliform bacteria.



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An explanation of the "What is in my drinking water?" package

Arsenic - (Maximum Contaminant Level = 0.010 mg/L) Arsenic occurs naturally in rock and soil. Some people who drink water with high levels of arsenic could experience skin damage or problems with their circulatory system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

Calcium - (No Maximum Level) Calcium, along with magnesium, is a mineral that commonly causes hard water, which leaves mineral deposits on faucets. Calcium is required by the human body at 1000 mg per day.

Chloride - (Suggested Maximum Level = 250 mg/L, more than 100 mg/L gives a salty taste to water) When combined with calcium and magnesium, chloride may increase the corrosivity of water. Chloride can give the water a briny taste.

Total Coliform Bacteria - (Maximum Contaminant Level = None Allowed) Coliform Bacteria is present in the feces of all warm blooded mammals, as well as birds and some plants. Coliform is used by the EPA as an indicator of the sanitary quality of a water supply. Coliform bacteria can be an indication of surface water contamination. **E. Coli Bacteria - (Maximum Contaminant Level = None Allowed)** E. Coli is associated with the presence of warm blooded animal feces, and is an indication of fecal contamination.

Conductivity (Specific Conductance) - (>1000 is considered saline water.)

Conductivity is a measurement of the total dissolved minerals in solution, and is also referred to as the salinity, salt content, total mineral content, or alkali content. This is a measure of the total amount of dissolved ions in water. Absolutely pure water has a conductance of zero. Drinking water with a conductivity of less than 400 would be considered excellent. Water with a conductivity over 1,000 may cause mineral build up in the soil of house plants, causing them to turn yellow. Sea water has a specific conductance of over 10,000.

Fluoride - (Maximum Contaminant Level = 4.0), (Suggested Maximum Level = 2.0)

Fluoride is found in many types of rock, and may enter well water through erosion of natural deposits. Levels of 0.7 to 1 mg/L are considered effective in preventing dental decay. However, at levels above 2.0 mg/L fluoride can cause mottling or permanent white stains on the teeth. Fluoride above 4.0 mg/L can cause dental or skeletal fluorosis.

Hardness - (60 mg/L = soft, 80 - 120 = moderate, 120 - 180 = hard, >180 mg/L is very hard) Hardness is mostly made up of calcium and magnesium. These ions combine with soap to form a scum. Hard water requires more soap to clean items and soap scum may build up on clothes etc. High levels of hardness can cause scaling to form in hot water heaters. If you need to know the hardness of your water in grains per gallon, you can use the following conversion factor: mg/L of hardness divided by 17.1 = grains per gallon of hardness.

Magnesium - (No Maximum Level) Magnesium, along with calcium, is a mineral that commonly causes hard water.

Nitrate - (Maximum Contaminant Level = 10 mg/L) An elevated level of nitrate is of concern to families with pregnant women, infants and to the elderly. High nitrate levels can cause a condition called methemoglobinemia ("blue baby syndrome"). This is caused by the nitrate reacting in the intestinal tract to form nitrite. Nitrite will attach to the hemoglobin molecules in the blood, causing a lack of oxygen supply to vital organs. Nitrate contaminates Montana waters more often than any other chemical substance. Nitrate in well water may indicate contamination from agricultural runoff or a septic system contamination.

Nitrite - (Maximum Contaminant Level = 1 mg/L) Nitrite will attach to the hemoglobin molecules in the blood, causing a lack of oxygen supply to vital organs.

pH - (Should be between 6.5 to 8.5 Units)

The pH is an indication of how acidic or basic the water is. pH 7 is neutral. Water with a pH of less than 7 is considered acidic. Water with a pH greater than 7 is considered basic. Green or blue green staining of household fixtures may be indicative of low pH (acidic) water leaching metals from plumbing pipes.

Sulfate - (Suggested Maximum Level = 250 mg/L) Sulfate in water containing calcium forms a hard scale in water heaters. In large amounts, sulfate gives a bitter "medicinal" taste to water. Concentrations greater than 250 mg/L may have a laxative effect, but up to 500 mg/L is considered safe.

The Environmental Agency (EPA) suggests that all private well owners test their wells on an annual basis. They recommend at a minimum testing for coliform bacteria, total nitrates, pH, and conductivity. See www.epa.gov/safewater for more information. There are many other water quality parameters that can be tested, including many metals, pesticides, herbicides, volatile organic compounds, and radio nuclides. If you have specific water quality concerns, call our lab for prices on other tests.