

It is very important to read all the instructions before collecting your water in bottles and submitting them to the laboratory. Learn more and watch a video about testing your drinking water at [www.healthvermont.gov/water](http://www.healthvermont.gov/water).

Your kit comes with:

- Four bottles: (2) 1-liter plastic bottles, (1) 250-milliliter plastic bottle, and (1) 100-milliliter plastic bottle. The smallest plastic bottle contains a preservative; do not rinse this bottle.
- Freezer packs (unfrozen)
- Cooler for returning samples

### Prepare

- Put the freezer packs in the freezer ahead of time.
- Wash and sanitize your hands prior to filling the bottles.
- Do not touch the inside of the caps or mouths of the bottles.
- Do not rinse the bottles.
- Fill the plastic bottles with water on the same day that you will submit them for testing.
- The First Draw Lead bottle (250-mL) must be filled first, then the remaining 3 bottles can be filled in any order.



### Collect First Draw Lead (medium plastic bottle, 250 mL)



- Do not use the faucet you are testing for at least 8 hours. Tip: collect sample first thing in the morning.
- Do not remove the faucet aerator before collecting this sample.
- Place the 250-mL opened bottle below the faucet **before** turning on the water.
- Turn cold water on slowly and fill the bottle.
- Fill the bottle to the line (drawn in marker at the top of the bottle) and screw the cap on tightly.

### Collect the Other Samples (bacteria, gross alpha, inorganic chemicals)



- Remove the sink aerator with clean hands.
- Run cold water at **high flow for 3-5 minutes** to flush water that has been sitting in your pipes.
- If sampling from a mixing (single-handed) faucet, run hot water for 2 minutes, then cold water for 2 minutes, and collect sample of cold water as indicated below.
- Run cold water at **medium flow** to collect your water samples.
- Fill the bottles to the neck and screw the caps on tightly. Do not over-fill.

## Homeowner's Testing Package – How to Collect Water Samples (continued)

### Return Your Samples to the Laboratory



- Complete all **Water Sample Collection Information Forms**, including the date and time you took each water sample.
- If you use any water treatment in your water, describe it on the form (for example: water softener).
- If treatment was bypassed or turned off, write “bypass treatment” in the sampler’s comment section.
- Label the sample bottles with your name, faucet location, and phone number so it can be matched with its correct form (for example: John Schmidt, kitchen sink, 802-XXX-XXXX).
- Put frozen freezer packs and the tightly closed bottles in a cooler with the completed forms. We suggest putting the forms inside a sealed plastic bag.
- **Read Sample Return Instructions carefully, this kit must be analyzed within 30 hours of collection.**

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### When can I expect my test results?

Bacteria results are released within 1-2 business days. The other results are typically available within 18 calendar days.

To avoid mail delays, sign up for emailed results. Write your preferred email address on the Water Sample Collection Information form or email the Laboratory at [AHS.VDHLabCustomerService@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHLabCustomerService@vermont.gov).

#### How often should I test my water?

Private well or spring water testing is recommended annually for total coliform/*E.coli* (Kit A), and every five years with this Homeowner’s kit which tests for total coliform/*E.coli*, inorganic chemicals and gross alpha.

#### Where can I get more information about the health effects of the contaminants in my drinking water?

For more information about contaminants, visit <https://www.healthvermont.gov/water-a-z>.

#### How can I make sure I send a sample that is acceptable for testing?

Sometimes we receive samples that need to be “qualified,” which means the sample did not meet all the testing requirements. **Here are a few things you can do to submit an acceptable drinking water sample:**

- Be sure the sample gets to the laboratory within 30 hours from the time you filled the water sample bottles.
- Use freezer packs and a cooler to keep the temperature of your water sample less than 42 degrees F (6° Celsius) – cold, but not freezing – until it reaches the laboratory.
- Read our [Sample Acceptance Policy](https://www.healthvermont.gov/lab/forms) (<https://www.healthvermont.gov/lab/forms>) to learn about why we might reject a sample.