If you are proving potable water for a building permit, you need to test for:

- Bacteria
- Nitrate
- Chloride

Jefferson County
Environmental Public Health
615 Sheridan St
Port Townsend, WA 98368
Phone: 360-385-9444
Fax: 360-379-4487
http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/204/Environmental-Health

DROP OFF FOR PICKUP
Wednesdays Only
9am-11am
Jefferson County Environmental Public Health
617 Sheridan St
Port Townsend, WA 98368
(360) 385-9444

Monday—Friday
8am-4:30pm
Spectra Labs
26276 Twelve Tree Lane, Suite C
Poulsbo, WA 98370
(360) 779-5141

PUBLIC HEALTH
ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

Testing Your Drinking Water for Nitrate & Chloride

Jefferson County Public Health

Why Test for Nitrate?

Nitrate can enter ground water from many sources such as nitrogen fertilizers, geological deposits, decomposing vegetation, and human or animal wastes. Nitrate poses a health risk because it can affect red blood cells and reduce their ability to carry oxygen to the body. This poses the greatest risk to infants less than one year old. Infants who are given water with high levels of nitrate (or formula or foods made with nitrate-contaminated water) may develop a serious health condition due to the lack of oxygen. This condition is called methemoglobinemia or "blue baby syndrome." Some scientists think that diarrhea can make this problem even worse.

Most older children and adults will not be affected because their red blood cells will be quickly converted back to normal. Some people have conditions that make them susceptible to having health problems from nitrate. This includes individuals who don't have enough stomach acids, and individuals with an inherited lack of the enzyme that converts affected red blood cells back to normal.

Why Test for Chloride?

Chloride does not pose a health risk – it is a component of ordinary table salt. We test for chloride to identify seawater intrusion into groundwater aquifers. Many coastal areas have the potential for seawater to enter the aquifers, and testing for chloride lets us monitor where and how much seawater is actually affecting the groundwater.

When Should You Sample?

If you are also sampling for coliform bacteria, collect the coliform sample first according to the directions in "How Do I Test My Water for Bacteria?" Otherwise, disconnect any hoses or appliances from your tap and let the water run for five minutes. First inflate your sample bottle, if it is the collapsible cube type, by gently blowing into the bottle. Fill the sample container to the shoulder of the bottle. Screw the lid back on securely, dry off the outside of the bottle, and fill out the "Water Sample Information" form.

Keep the sample cool and bring it to a drop off point listed on the back (or another accredited drinking water lab) within twenty four (24) hours.

WATER SAMPLE INFORMATION FORM

Test For: (circle one) Nitrate Choloride Both

Sample Location: _____ **County:** _____

Date Collected: _____ **Time:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Please call Spectra at 360-779-5141 for current fees.