

## DISCOVERING SOURCES OF WELL CONTAMINATION

**FIRST**--Review your sample-taking procedure to ensure that instructions on back of data form were followed. Some common sampling errors include: Taking sample from kitchen faucet, through a water softening or filter system. NEVER take bacterial samples from a kitchen faucet, and ALWAYS BYPASS water softener or filter systems.

**NEW WELLS** -- Check with well driller to make sure well was chlorinated--using chlorine granules or tablets for drilled wells, and liquid chlorox for bored wells--before sampling for bacteriological test. New wells, especially drilled(artesian-4-6 in. diameter) need thorough flushing before taking a sample.

**VACANT / SELDOM-USED HOME** -- Anytime a well is not used regularly, or has been unused for several months, bacteria will grow in the well and lines. The water should be thoroughly run, sometimes even chlorination will be necessary, before sampling.

**OLDER -- BORED WELLS(30-36 in.diameter)**--Check the condition of the well top--if cracked or chipped--it may need replacing. Check area around the well--if water is able to stand close around the well; some landscaping may need to be done, to slope ground away from the well on all sides. Concrete apron should be intact, around the outside of the well--if cracked, it may need repair. Look inside of well--if recent, fresh muddy stains are seen, inside well curbing, it may indicate recent surface contamination--may require repair to grouting; around pipe leading to house. Shine a strong flashlight (preferably at night when there is no reflection from sky) to see beneath the surface of the water, to see if there are any fine tree roots--they look somewhat like bunches of hair. If any trees are growing within 10-15 feet of well, they may need to be cut down, to stop roots from continuing to push into the well. A qualified person who cleans out wells can clean out a well and remove any roots, etc., then chlorinate the well. In some cases, the well simply needs to be cleaned out, to remove accumulated mud and sand from around the foot valve, and sometimes the foot valve needs to be raised up from the bottom of the well. Chlorination of the well should be done upon completion of well cleaning.

**OLDER--15+ YEARS-- DRILLED WELLS**--Surface contamination can enter well top, if condition of top has deteriorated. Some repair work may be required, then chlorination with chlorine granules or tablets and thorough flushing.

**RECENT PLUMBING WORK**--Any time work has been done on house lines or well--adding a bathroom, repairing broken lines, installing a new pump, etc.--contamination can be introduced into a well and it will require chlorination to disinfect the system.