



Chemung County Health Department  
**Environmental Health Services**  
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[www.chemungcountyhealth.org](http://www.chemungcountyhealth.org)

### Private Well Testing

There are no local certified environmental laboratories near Elmira. To provide convenient access to testing, the Health Department serves as a drop point for two NYS certified laboratories. Contact the laboratory for pricing and containers if you need more than the standard screening tests.

**Total Coliform/E. coli bacteria** - standard potability test. It should be tested annually, during a rainy period (when most contamination occurs), for several years to establish that your well is secure, then every few years thereafter. You should also test for coliform bacteria anytime in-well repairs are made.

If coliform bacteria are detected, the lab will check for E. coli. If bacteria are present the lab will let you know as soon as the test is complete, within two days of sample receipt.

**Nitrate** is sometimes tested in order to gauge the overall quality of the water source. Nitrate is usually due to nearby application of fertilizer, septic systems or leaking sewers.

**Lead** does not come from your well or municipal water, but from your household plumbing and faucets. It is best controlled by keeping aerators clean and flushing water lines each morning. Instructions for checking the worst case (no flushing) are provided with the sample bottle.

**You can pick up sample bottles, instructions and order forms at the Environmental Health Services office weekdays (except holidays) between 8:30 and 4:30.** We are in the Chalk Pavilion at the Chemung County Health Center, 103 Washington Street, Elmira.

**Total coliform and nitrate samples must be tested soon after collection, so should be sampled the day of pickup or late the night before.** If you miss the noon pickup time, your sample will expire and you will need to collect a new one.

**Include a check payable to the lab you are using or exact cash only** when you drop off your samples. The labs do not accept credit cards. Contact the lab directly for costs. Your sample results are confidential, so lab reports are not provided to the Health Department.

Lab	Pickup days	Reporting
Microbac (Cortland) (607) 753-3403	Noon on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	Generally issues reports in 1-2 weeks
ALS (Rochester) (585) 288-5380	Noon on the first and third Wednesday of each month	Generally issues reports in 2-3 weeks