



Sampling Your Drinking Water

Gross Alpha Test (Kit RA)

Thank you for testing your drinking water. See instructions below on how to fill your 1-liter bottle. Kit RA is recommended every five years. Learn more and watch a video about testing your drinking water at www.healthvermont.gov/water.

Prepare

- Remove the aerator when you collect the sample.
- Do not touch the inside of the cap or mouth of the bottle.
- Run cold water at high flow for 3-5 minutes to flush the water that has been sitting in your pipes.



Collect Sample

- Decrease water flow to **medium to collect your water sample**.
- Fill the bottle to the neck and screw the cap on tightly.



Return

- Complete the **Water Sample Collection Information Form**, including the date and time you took the water sample.
- If you use any **water treatment**, check the appropriate box on the form (for example: water softener).
- If treatment was bypassed or turned off, write **"BYPASS TREATMENT"** in the sampler's comments section.
- Label the sample bottle with sampler's name and phone number (for example: Jane Smith, 802-XXX-XXXX).
- To get your sample to the Department of Health Laboratory within 48 hours, either **bring or mail it** to the address listed on the next page.



Over, please.

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I sample before or after water treatment?

To check treated drinking water, take the sample from a kitchen faucet. To check what is coming from the well, bypass the water treatment when collecting the sample. If treatment is bypassed, make sure to write “**BYPASS TREATMENT**” in the sampler’s comments section of the form.

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 that the sample did not meet all the testing requirements. Some reasons water samples are qualified include:

- High iron and/or manganese
- Presence of sediment or solids

Here are a few **things you can do to submit an acceptable drinking water sample**:

- Submit your sample in the sample bottle provided by the laboratory.
- Make sure to complete the Water Sample Collection Information Form.
- Be sure the sample gets to the laboratory within 48 hours from the time you filled the bottle.

How can I mail my sample to the lab?

Many people choose to bring their sample to the laboratory themselves. People who ship their samples do so in several ways. You can use any of the services below, but make sure to ship your sample **between Monday and Thursday** so your sample arrives before the weekend. **Do not ship on a Friday**. Samples that arrive on a weekend may be rejected.

We suggest one of these options:

- United States Postal Service (USPS) – use express or overnight mail to send to:
PO Box 1125, Burlington, VT 05402-1125.
- United Parcel Service (UPS) or Federal Express (FedEx) – Ship samples overnight to our physical address:
359 South Park Drive, Colchester, VT 05446

When can I expect my test results?

Test results will be mailed about 14 days after the water sample was received.

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

For more information, and to see a video about how to test your drinking water, visit healthvermont.gov/water.