



Bacteriological testing of water

Adapted, with permission from: Cairncross & Feachem (1993) Environmental Health Engineering in the Tropics: an Introductory Text 2nd edition. London: John Wiley & Sons.

Indicator bacteria

Indicator bacteria are used to assess the quality of water. They are organisms that are easy to detect and count, and whose presence indicates the presence of other, more harmful bacteria. The most commonly used indicator bacteria are coliforms, faecal coliforms, and faecal streptococci. These bacteria are found in the faeces of warm-blooded animals, including humans. Their presence in water suggests that the water has been contaminated by faeces, and therefore may contain other harmful bacteria.

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Chlorinated supplies

Chlorinated supplies are water supplies that have been treated with chlorine. Chlorine is a powerful disinfectant that kills most bacteria, viruses, and protozoa. It is commonly used to disinfect drinking water. Chlorinated supplies are generally considered to be safe for drinking, but they can have a strong taste and odor. Some people are also allergic to chlorine.

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Untreated supplies

Untreated supplies are water supplies that have not been treated with chlorine. These supplies are generally considered to be unsafe for drinking, as they may contain harmful bacteria, viruses, and protozoa. Untreated supplies are commonly found in rural areas and in developing countries.

Conclusion

- ▶ The water supply system is a complex system that involves the interaction of various components, including the water source, treatment plant, distribution network, and end users.
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