Methods Protocol

Coliform Assessment
Appendix V

1. Background Information on Coliform
2. Methods Protocol: Total Coliform
4. Use of Autoclaves (to prepare materials for use in testing)
Background Information on Coliform Bacteria
Background Information on Coliform Bacteria:

Coliform bacteria are a group of microorganisms that live in the intestines of warm and cold-blooded animal and aid in the digestion of food. Coliform presence in water is an indicator that human or animal waste is or was present. The presence of some fecal material in streams, lakes, etc. is to be expected due to the environment we live in. As long as these levels remain low, swimming is relatively safe. However, any coliform content in drinking water (i.e. in wells) presents immediate concern for the health of anyone exposed.

Coliform bacteria in drinking or swallowing water may not directly make you ill. Conversely, coliform bacteria also act as an indicator of the possible present of other pathogens associated with human and animal waste. Common waterborne illnesses are giardiasis and cryptosporidiosis, both affect the intestine through cramps and diarrhea.

High coliform levels may be caused by domestic sewage or non-point sources of human and animal waste.

References:
