



The DESIGN Project

The DESIGN project (Detection of Environmental Sources of Infectious Diseases in Groundwater Networks) is an EPA funded project involving NUI Galway, UCC and Technical University Dublin (TUD) that aims to investigate whether private wells are a source of pathogenic *E. coli*. The *E. coli* that live in our intestines are not usually harmful, in fact they help us to break down our food. However, certain pathogenic *E. coli* strains that live in the intestines of cattle and sheep can be harmful to humans and can cause serious gastrointestinal illness in susceptible people, such as young children and the elderly. These bugs are known as Verotoxigenic *E. coli* (or VTEC).

What will we do?

This project will collect water samples to test well waters for the presence of these harmful *E.coli*. We will collect a large sample (30 litres) of untreated water from your outside well tap and/or your kitchen tap. We will also ask you some simple questions about your well, and take some site measurements, such as well depth, water table level, and distances from the well to the road, agriculture, and other potential pollution sources. Samples then will be returned to the lab and tested for the presence of coliforms and *E. coli* using the standard water microbial quality testing method. We will also test the water for potentially harmful bacteria including VTEC. A report with microbial quality results, and interpretations and recommendations based on these results, will be emailed to you within a few weeks of sampling (free of charge).

To register your interest in participating please [complete the registration form](#). Thank you!

For details on how to protect your private well see <https://www.epa.ie/environment-and-you/drinking-water/household-wells/>

Data Protection Information

The purpose of this document is to explain to you what the work is about and what your participation would involve, so as to enable you to make an informed choice. The aim of this study is to examine well water, both raw and treated water, for different microbial properties. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any point. All information you provide will be confidential and your anonymity will be protected throughout the study. It will be necessary to gather information including your name, email address, phone number and home address including Eircode for the purposes of sample collection. This data will be stored on an encrypted server for up to 10 years but will not be shared with any other authority. Only the researchers involved with the DESIGN project will have access to this data. Access to your own personal data can be requested or alternatively you can have the data erased at any point during or after this project by emailing onehealth@nuigalway.ie.

Any queries regarding data protection can be directed to dataprotection@nuigalway.ie. You have the right to lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Commissioner at <https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/contact/how-contact-us>.