



Sept. 21, 2023

Dear municipal partner,

Grey Bruce Public Health plans to launch on **Oct. 4, 2023**, a locally designed service that will provide Grey-Bruce residents with equitable, timely, and close-to-home access to Public Health Ontario's [Well Water Testing \(Private Drinking Water\)](#) program.

This made-in-Grey-Bruce initiative could not have been possible without the ongoing, critical collaboration between Public Health and its municipal partners. Providing this service closely aligns with our shared goal of protecting and promoting the health of everyone in Grey-Bruce.

This letter is intended provide information to our municipal partners on PHO's Well Water Testing program; the locations, dates, and hours of water sample pick-up/drop-off locations in Grey-Bruce; and guidance for residents on taking and submitting water samples.

PHO's WELL WATER TESTING PROGRAM

Public Health Ontario tests water samples submitted by households that draw their drinking water from privately owned systems/sources, such as wells, treated lake water, and cisterns.

Samples are tested at a PHO laboratory in London, Ont., for the presence of bacterial indicators of contamination, namely:

- Total coliforms –bacteria often found in animal waste, sewage, soil, and vegetation.
- *E. coli* – bacteria normally found in the digestive systems of people and animals.

The program does not test for other contaminants, such as chemicals.

NEWLY ESTABLISHED COURIER ROUTES IN GREY-BRUCE

In collaboration with local municipalities, Grey Bruce Public Health has developed a local service to allow residents to both pick up water sample collection kits and drop off completed samples at 14 strategically placed locations in Grey-Bruce.

The locations will form two routes – a Bruce County route and a Grey County route. The Bruce County route will be serviced by a local courier each Wednesday, starting Oct. 4, 2023, while the Grey County route will be serviced by a local courier each Friday, beginning Oct. 6, 2023.

A PHO courier will then gather the collected samples and transport them to the PHO lab for testing.

A healthier future for all.

Water sample drop-off locations have been established in the following municipalities: Northern Bruce Peninsula, South Bruce Peninsula, Arran-Elderslie, Saugeen Shores, Brockton, and Kincardine, along with Meaford, Chatsworth, West Grey, Hanover, Southgate, Grey Highlands, and Town of the Blue Mountains.

A full schedule, with the address of each location and estimated courier pick-up times, is attached to this letter.

Along with the once-weekly pick-up sites, a PHO courier will continue to collect submitted water samples from the Grey Bruce Public Health building in Owen Sound each weekday. Water samples will also be picked up by the PHO courier five days a week from the Walkerton location.

TAKING AND SUBMITTING WATER SAMPLES

GBPH recommends households on wells or other private systems test their water at least three times a year, after any work is done to their system, and after significant weather events, such as a fast thaw or severe rainstorm.

Residents are advised to review the courier schedule to ensure they are properly timing when to take and submit water samples.

Samples must be received by the PHO lab and tested within 48 hours of the sample being taken.

To ensure this happens, residents should, if possible, take and drop off samples the morning of the courier pickup day – but before the courier is scheduled to arrive – or, at the latest, on the afternoon before the courier pickup day.

For example, if the courier is slated to pick up submitted water samples at a location each Wednesday at 9:30 a.m., residents should ensure their sample is taken and dropped off at that location on either the Tuesday afternoon or the Wednesday, between when the location opens for the day and the scheduled courier pick-up time.

Residents should carefully follow PHO's step-by-step instructions for collecting well water samples. They are available on the sample submission form and online at the following link: [Taking a Well Water Sample.](#)

Residents should also ensure the accompanying paperwork is filled out completely and accurately.

Water samples should be kept cool until they are delivered to a drop-off location. Refrigerators are available at each drop-off site.

PHO provides test results directly to the resident(s) who submitted the sample, either by mail or telephone. Grey Bruce Public Health does not provide these results.

Anyone requiring assistance with interpreting sample results or additional questions can contact Grey Bruce Public Health at 519-376-9420 and selecting Option 4.

Sincerely,

Grey Bruce Public Health
101 17th St. E.,
Owen Sound,
N4K 0A5