



Media Release

Oct. 3, 2023

GBPH launching new service to ensure equitable access to well water testing program

Grey Bruce Public Health is pleased to announce that it will launch on Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023, a locally developed service that will ensure all Grey-Bruce residents have equitable, timely access to Public Health Ontario's free well water testing program.

The new service, developed in collaboration with area municipalities, will allow residents on private drinking water systems to pick up sample collection kits and drop off water samples at 14 locations throughout Grey-Bruce.

The locations will form two routes, which will be serviced one day a week by a local courier contracted by GBPH. A Bruce County route will be serviced on Wednesdays, while a Grey County route will be serviced on Fridays.

A Public Health Ontario courier will continue to pick up samples at both GBPH in Owen Sound and in Walkerton five days a week. On Wednesdays and Fridays, the PHO courier will also take samples collected by the local courier to a London lab for testing.

"This made-in-Grey-Bruce service will put PHO's complimentary well water testing program within a 30-minute drive of nearly every household in Grey-Bruce," says Grey-Bruce Medical Officer of Health Dr. Ian Arra.

"We would like to sincerely thank each of our partners, particularly local municipalities, for assisting us in creating a fair and accessible service that adheres to our collective mission of protecting the health of everyone in Grey-Bruce."

GBPH's goal, when developing the new service, was to maintain water sample drop-off locations in existing communities, while re-establishing locations in place before the COVID-19 pandemic. That included restoring a site in Saugeen Shores. With the local service, there are now drop-off locations in more Grey-Bruce communities than were in place before the pandemic. New locations have been established in Chatsworth, The Blue Mountains, Southgate, and Chesley.

A healthier future for all.

101 17th Street East, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 0A5 www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

519-376-9420

1-800-263-3456

Fax 519-376-0605

Details of the new routes – including a list of drop-off locations and information on when residents must collect and drop off samples to ensure they adhere to required timelines for testing – are available at the following link: [Well Water Testing Service](#). A [map](#) of the drop-off locations has also been developed.

Public Health Ontario's [private drinking water testing program](#) analyzes samples for the presence of bacterial indicators of contamination, specifically E. coli and total coliforms. Residents receive test results directly from PHO.

GBPH recommends households that draw their drinking water from 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 rain.

GBPH has long collaborated with PHO and other partners to make the well water testing program available free of charge to Grey-Bruce residents. Key to the program's success in Grey-Bruce – due to the region's size and rural nature – is having multiple locations where people can drop off water samples.

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, policy changes by Grey-Bruce hospitals resulted in a reduction in the number of available pick-up/drop-off locations in Grey-Bruce. Several grocery stores, which had been deemed essential businesses, stepped up to serve as temporary locations.

Following the COVID-19 emergency, GBPH began discussions with PHO in hopes of not only re-establishing permanent locations but increasing the number of locations to ensure all Grey-Bruce residents had equitable access to the program. However, PHO informed GBPH that it did not intend to increase the number of locations and was considering eliminating most local drop-off sites.

GBPH then decided to create a local solution to ensure the program remained equitable and accessible throughout Grey-Bruce.

For More Information:

To connect with the Medical Officer of Health or the program manager, please contact:
Denis Langlois, Communications Co-ordinator,
Grey Bruce Public Health,
519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 ext. 1315,
Communications@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca