

Water in 75% city homes has diarrhoea-causing bacteria: IIT-M

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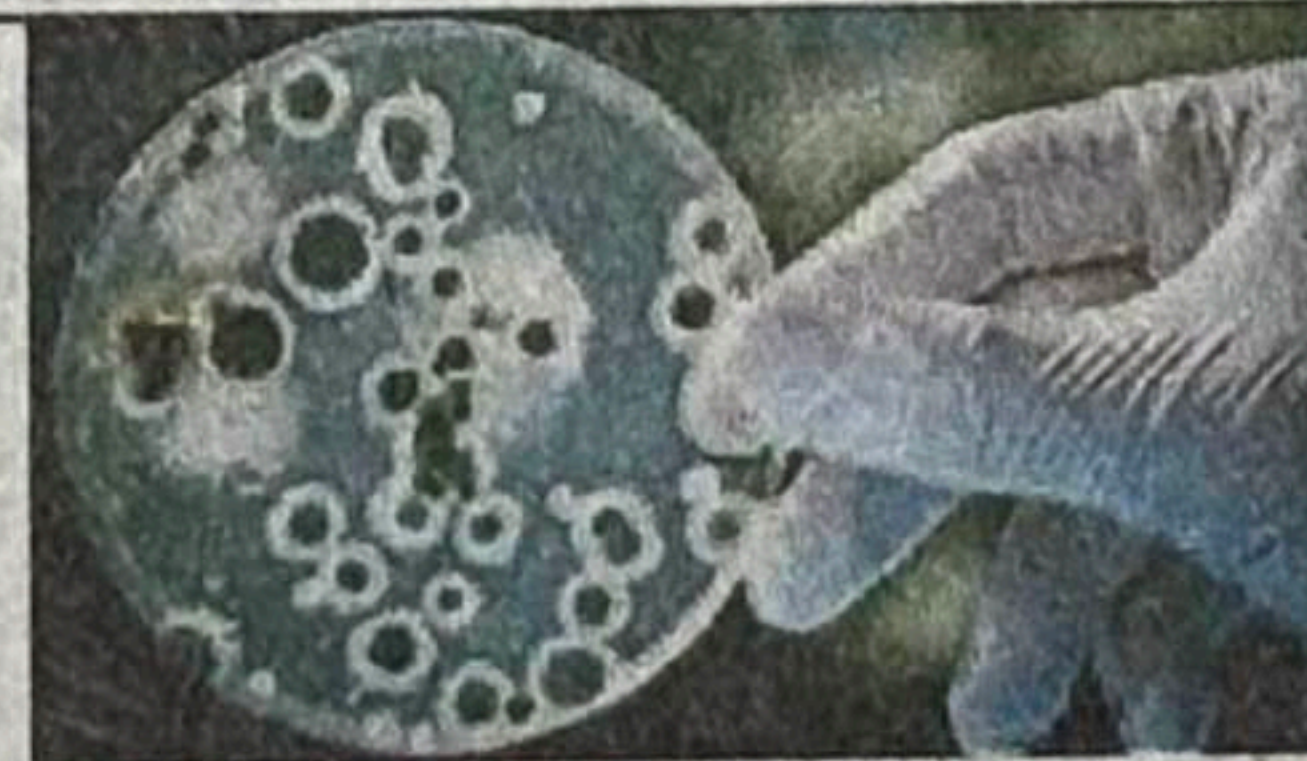
Chennai: Falling ill often? It's the water you drink.

Water in 75% of the homes in Chennai is contaminated by E coli, the bacteria that can cause diarrhoea and vomiting, a survey done by IIT Madras has found. And this includes households that use water treatment systems.

Done as part of the People's Water Data initiative, the study found water taps, unclean sinks and or water containers to be the source of bacteria. Researchers and students collected drinking water samples from 752 households

CLEANLINESS THE KEY

E. coli is a bacterium commonly found in the gut of humans and warm-blooded animals. It is transmitted to humans primarily through contaminated foods, faecal contamination of water, raw milk and contaminated raw vegetables and sprouts



SYMPTOMS: Abdominal cramps and diarrhoea that may in some cases lead to bloody diarrhoea. Fever and vomiting may also occur

Drink pasteurized milk, as it kills harmful germs, including E. coli

ENSURE CLEAN WATER

- Maintenance of purifiers
- Keep taps and sinks clean
- Store water in clean, airtight containers
- Boil water for one minute before drinking

(from taps, borewells and other sources). E coli gets into food and water through faecal contamination.

“Even those using water purifiers might not always be drinking safe and clean water due to inappropriate practic-

es including lack of maintenance,” said Suzan Kagan from Tel Aviv University and one of the course coordinators of the water quality programme at IIT Madras.

“Many of the 75% of households that were found to be affected had young children,” said T Pradeep, one of the instructors for the course. “This is not about the need for any technology or treatment. It highlights the need for greater awareness to ensure safe drinking water,” he said. Tips: Follow instructions of water purifier makers, keep water containers airtight, clean and away from direct

sunlight. Pradeep said the bacteria might be hosted in taps or sinks.

The survey also found 58% of children under the age of five drink water directly from taps, while 15% rely on treated water systems. Among those using treatment systems, 73% rated the water quality good compared to only 31% among households without any water treatment. In a recent survey, 48% of households reported sourcing their drinking water from taps, while 33% relied on treated and filtered water systems.

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