

Fact Sheet About What to Do During a Boil Water Advisory

Boiling water

To boil water

- Fill a pot with water.
- Heat the water until bubbles come from the bottom of the pot to the top.
- Once the water reaches a rolling boil, let it boil for 1 minute.
- Turn off the heat source and let the water cool.
- Pour the water into a clean container with a cover for storage.

Disinfecting water

If you are unable to boil your water, disinfect it instead.

If tap water is clear:

- Use unscented bleach (bleach that does not have an added scent).
- Add 1/8 teaspoon (8 drops or about 0.75 milliliters) of unscented household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.
- Store disinfected water in clean container with a cover.

If tap water is cloudy:

- Filter water using clean cloth.
- Use unscented bleach (bleach that does not have an added scent).
- Add 1/4 teaspoon (16 drops or 1.5 milliliters) of unscented household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.
- Store disinfected water in clean container with a cover.

Remember that containers may need to be sanitized before using them to store safe water.

To sanitize containers:

- Use unscented bleach (bleach that does not have an added scent).
- Make a sanitizing solution by mixing 1 teaspoon (5 milliliters) of unscented household liquid bleach in 1 quart (32 ounces, 4 cups, or about 1 liter) of water.
- Pour this sanitizing solution into a clean storage container and shake well, making sure that the solution coats the entire inside of the container.

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- Let the clean storage container sit at least 30 seconds, and then pour the solution out of the container.
- Let empty container air dry OR rinse it with clean water that has already been made safe, if available.

Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners. Open windows and doors to get fresh air when you use bleach.

Water filters

Boil tap water even if it is filtered. Most kitchen and other household water filters typically **do not** remove bacteria or viruses.

Preparing and cooking food

- Wash all fruits and vegetables with boiled water that has cooled or bottled water.
- Bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute before adding food to cook.
- Use boiled water when preparing drinks, such as coffee, tea, and lemonade
- Wash food preparation surfaces with boiled water.

Feeding babies and using formula

- Breastfeeding is best. Continue to breastfeed. If breastfeeding is not an option:
- Use ready-to-use baby formula, if possible.
- Prepare powdered or concentrated baby formula with bottled water. Use boiled water if you do not have bottled water. Disinfect water for baby formula if you cannot boil your water (see above for directions on how to use bleach to disinfect water).
- Wash and sterilize bottles and nipples before use.
- If you cannot sterilize bottles, try to use single-serve, ready-to-feed bottles.

Ice

- Do not use ice from ice trays, ice dispensers, or ice makers.
- Throw out all ice made with tap water.
- Make new ice with boiled or bottled water.

Bathing and showering

Be careful not to swallow any water when bathing or showering.

Use caution when bathing babies and young children. Consider giving them a sponge bath to reduce the chance of them swallowing water.

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Brushing teeth

Brush teeth with boiled or bottled water. Do not use untreated tap water.

Washing dishes

Household dishwashers generally are safe to use if the water reaches a final rinse temperature of at least 150 degrees or if the dishwasher has a sanitizing cycle.

To wash dishes by hand:

- Wash and rinse the dishes as you normally would using hot water.
- In a separate basin, add 1 teaspoon of unscented household liquid bleach for each gallon of warm water.
- Soak the rinsed dishes in the water for at least one minute.
- Let the dishes air dry completely.

Laundry

It is safe to do laundry as usual.

Pets

Pets can get some of the same diseases as people. It is a good idea to give them boiled water that has been cooled.

For more information, see or contact:

- **Personal Preparation and Storage of Safe Water**: CDC provides guidance on the amount of water needed for good health, as well how to prepare and store safe water before and during an emergency.
- **Hygiene and Handwashing**: CDC provides guidance on alternative hygienic practices when water is not available or is contaminated.
- **A Guide to Water Filters**: CDC maintains a guide for filters that remove *Cryptosporidium* or *Giardia*.
- EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791
- **Consumer Information**: EPA provides information and guidance about drinking water quality, emergencies, contaminants, public health issues, and treatment and storage.
- Water system: [name, title, phone, e-mail, website]
- State or local public health department: [name, title, phone, e-mail, website]
- Primacy Agency: [name, title, phone, e-mail, website]

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Why are boil water advisories issued?

Boil water advisories are issued when a water source is shut off, or when a water source pressure level drops below 20 psi. With this loss of pressure, there is a great possibility for water to become contaminated with harmful bacteria.

What determines the length of a boil water advisory?

The results of the water sample tests. When water service is restored, a Lab Analyst comes to the site to take water samples from several points in the affected service area. The samples are allowed to incubate up to 24 hours; no less than 18 hours. If the water is contaminated, bacteria will have grown.

How long must water be boiled prior to consumption?

Vigorously (with bubbles) for at least one (1) minute.

Why should I boil water prior to consumption?

Boiling the water kills harmful bacteria if water is contaminated.

What precautions should be taken after a boil water advisory is lifted, if test results reveal that the water was contaminated?

- Flush water lines by running all cold water faucets in the home for approximately one (1) minute.
- Flush automatic ice makers by discarding three (3) batches of ice made.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Run drinking water fountains for one (1) minute.
- Run water through direct water connections for five (5) minutes.

Do I still need to boil water if I have a filter system on my faucet or refrigerator?

Yes. Water filters are not designed to remove harmful bacteria.

Is water safe for washing dishes, laundry or bathing?

Dishes: Water is safe for washing dishes, but hot soapy water should be used with one (1) tablespoon of bleach per gallon as a precaution. Dishes should be rinsed in boiled water.

Laundry: There are no restrictions on doing laundry.

Baths: Water is safe for bathing.

If I consumed water before I knew of the advisory, what will happen?

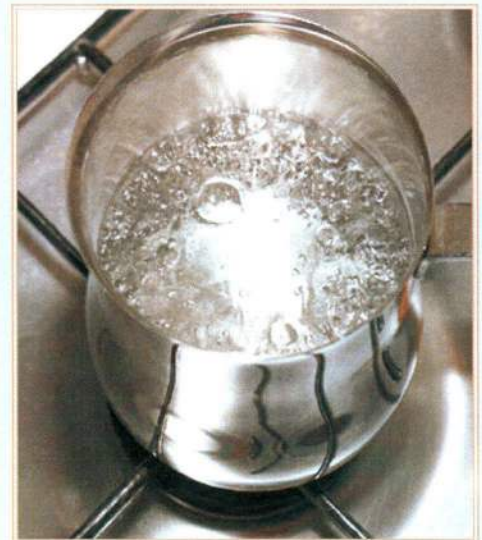
If you consume water that is proven to be contaminated and you are in good health, you should not become ill. However, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems may become ill.

What are some of the symptoms of being affected by consuming contaminated water?

Symptoms may include diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. If you feel that your health has been compromised, you should seek medical attention.

What should I do for drinking water until the boil water advisory is lifted?

- Melt ice in freezer (ice made prior to the advisory).



- Boil all water from the tap.

What are other ways to disinfect water for consumption if I can't boil it?

A. Household Bleach. Bleach will kill some, but not all, types of disease-causing organisms that may be in water. If the water is cloudy, filter it through a clean cloth to allow it to settle, and draw off the clear water for disinfection. Add 1/8th teaspoon (or 8 drops) of regular, unscented liquid household bleach for each gallon of water. Stir it well, and let it stand for 30 minutes before you use it. Store in clean containers with covers.

Available Chloride	Drops Per Quart	Drops Per Gallon	Drops Per Liter
1%	10	40	10
4-6%	2	8	2
7-10%	1	4	1

B. Granular Calcium Hypochlorite. Add and dissolve ¼ ounce per 2 galls on water. The mixture will produce a stock chlorine solution of approximate 500 milligrams per liter. To disinfect water, add 1 pint (16 ounces) of solution to each 12.5 gallons of water to be disinfected. To remove odor, aerate the disinfected water by pouring it back and forth from one clean container to another.

C. Chlorine Tablets. Chlorine tablets containing the necessary dosage for drinking water disinfection can be purchased in a commercially prepared form. These tablets are available from drug and sporting goods stores, and should be used per instructions outlined on the package. When instruction are not available, use one tablets per each quarter or liter of water to be purified.

D. Iodine. You can use common iodine (2% U. S. Iodine) from your medicine cabinet or first aid kit to disinfect contaminated water. Use five drops of iodine per each quart or liter of water. Note: for cloudy water, add 10 drops of iodine per quart or liter of water, and let the solution stand for at least 30 minutes.

E. Iodine Tablets. You can used iodine tablets to disinfect filtered and settled water. Purchase commercially prepared iodine tablets containing the necessary dosage for drinking water disinfection at drug and sporting goods stores. Use as stated in instruction. If instructions are not available, use one tablet for each quart or liter of filtered or settled water.

Does the issuance of a boil water alert mean that the water is definitely contaminated?

No. An advisory means that due to loss of water pressure, there is a possibility that water could be contaminated; therefore, we operate under the precaution that contamination is present until the results of the water sample tests are received.

Other than for consumption, what are other activities where water must be boiled prior to use?

Brushing teeth
 Cooking
 Preparing drinks
 Washing raw foods or foods in general
 Making ice
 Water for pets
 In whatever form, if you can consume the water, it must be boiled.

How long should I wait to consume water after it is boiled?

Wait for the water to cool before using it, or store in the refrigerator in a clean container to cool.

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