

# 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.
- 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 bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon).
- Add 1/8 teaspoon (8 drops or about 0.75 milliliters) of 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 bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon).
- Add 1/4 teaspoon (16 drops or 1.5 milliliters) of 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:

- Use bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon).
- Add 1 teaspoon (64 drops or 5 milliliters) of household liquid bleach to 1 quart (32 ounces, 4 cups, or about 1 liter) of water.
- Pour this into a clean storage container and shake well, making sure that the solution coats the entire inside of the container.



## Fact Sheet About What to Do During a Boil Water Advisory, continued

- Let sit at least 30 seconds, and then pour out solution.
- Let air dry OR rinse 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. Water filters **do not** remove bacteria or viruses.

### Preparing and cooking food

- Use boiled water to wash all fruits and vegetables.
- Bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute before adding food.
- Use boiled water when preparing drinks, such as coffee, tea, and lemonade

### Feeding infants and using formula

- Breastfeeding is best. Continue to breastfeed. If breastfeeding is not an option:
- Use ready-to-use formula, if possible.
- Prepare powdered or concentrated formula with bottled water. Use boiled water if you do not have bottled water. Disinfect water for 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 infants and young children. Consider giving them a sponge bath to reduce the chance of them swallowing water.



## Fact Sheet About What to Do During a Boil Water Advisory

### Brushing teeth

Brush teeth with boiled or bottled water.

### Washing dishes

Dishwashers are safe to use if the water reaches a temperature of at least 160 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 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 using regular methods.

### Pets

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

For more information, contact:

- [Personal Water Use](#): CDC provides guidance on the amount of water needed for good health, as well as its preparation and storage in preparation for and during an emergency.
- [Hygiene and Sanitation](#): 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*.
- Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791
  - » [EPA Consumer Information Page](#)

