



HOW TO USE WATER SAFELY DURING A PRECAUTIONARY DRINKING WATER ADVISORY/EMERGENCY BOIL WATER ORDER

1. How do I use tap water when a Precautionary Drinking Water Advisory/Emergency Boil Water Order (PDWA/EBWO) has been issued?

The water should **NOT** be used for drinking, making infant formula and juices, cooking, making ice, washing fruits or vegetables, or brushing teeth. For these purposes, boiled or treated or bottled water should be used.

Before using the tap water it must be brought to a rapid rolling boil for one minute.

- If there are children in the home, place the pot on the back burner to avoid scalds.
- Boil only as much water in the pot as you can comfortably lift without spilling.
- Discard all ice made previously and disinfect the ice cube trays. Make ice using cooled water that was previously boiled.

2. What is the reason for boiling or treating the tap water?

Boiling the water destroys all the disease-causing microorganisms (pathogens) and the water is considered potable (safe to drink) after it is cooled.

3. Can I take a bath or shower?

Adults and teens may take baths or showers with untreated water. Older children could also be given a shower with a hand-held showerhead but be sure to avoid getting tap water on the face. Due to the likelihood that young children will drink bath water, they should be given a sponge bath instead of bathing them in a tub.

4. Can I use the water for handwashing?

If the Precautionary Drinking Water Advisory/Emergency Boil Water Order (PDWA/EBWO) has been issued, water can be made safe for handwashing by following one of the described procedure below on water treatment or boiling:

- a) Add 45 mL (1.5 oz) of liquid household bleach to 45 litres of water. Mix and let it stand for at least 20 minutes prior to use.
- b) Bring the water to a rapid rolling boil for one minute and cool it to a temperature that won't burn or scald the skin when used for handwashing.

5. How else can I disinfect my hands?

- You can use alcohol-based hand disinfectants that contain more than 60% alcohol.
- There are other kinds of gels or solutions also available in the market that can effectively disinfect the hands. These products are widely used in health care settings after washing hands or in situations when water is not available.
- The wet wipes used for cleaning babies at diaper change are not effective for disinfecting hands and should not be used for this purpose.

6. Can I brush my teeth with untreated water?

No. Untreated water may contain harmful microorganisms. Infection might occur even when swallowing only a small amount of water. Use cooled water that was previously boiled for brushing teeth. Approved bottled water is also acceptable.

7. Can the dishwasher be used to clean and disinfect utensils?

- If your dishwasher has a hot temperature setting or uses disinfectant, it can sanitize dishes. Make sure that the dishes go through the complete dishwasher program, including the drying cycle.
- If your dishwasher does not have a hot temperature setting, make sure after finishing the cycle, to soak the dishes for one minute in a solution of 30 mL (1 oz) of bleach mixed with 13.5 litres of lukewarm water. Let the dishes air-dry.

8. Can I use bottled water or buy water from vending machines?

Yes.

9. Should I change the way I'm doing laundry?

No. Continue doing laundry the way you usually do.

10. Is the water safe to use to fill wading pools for children?

No. The water is not safe for use in wading pools. Water usually gets into the mouths of small children and could lead to an infection.

11. I have a reverse osmosis water filtration device installed. Does this make the water safe for drinking or cooking?

Yes, water that is treated by distillation or a properly maintained reverse osmosis unit is considered safe to drink.

NOTE: Other water treatment devices such as cartridge filters or activated carbon filters designed for taste and odour control do not remove disease-causing microorganisms. Water from these devices should also be brought to a rolling boil for one minute before drinking or using it for cooking. Water filtration units should be back-washed or disinfected after the PDWA/EBWO has ended. Contact your manufacturer for more information about your device.

12. How do I disinfect counter tops, chopping boards, or utensils?

Counter tops, chopping boards, or utensils should be washed with soap and sanitized with a disinfected water solution that is prepared by mixing 60 mL (1/4 cup) of bleach into 4.5 litres of water. Do not reuse or store this solution. It must be made daily as the sanitizing solution loses its strength with time.

13. Can I drink coffee from my home coffee maker?

Coffee makers usually produce water at around 70°C, and are sufficient to inactivate bacteria such as *E. coli*, protozoa such as *Cryptosporidium*, and viruses such as Hepatitis A and Norovirus. However, a sufficient amount of time is needed to ensure that all harmful organisms are destroyed. It is therefore recommended that hot coffee be held for at least 5 minutes before consumption. If you do not know if your coffee maker reaches 70°C it would be best to use boiled tap water or bottled water.

14. Is it safe to use electric kettles with auto shut-off during a PDWA/EBWO?

Yes. All pathogens are killed or inactivated instantly at 100°C. A rolling boil for one minute is recommended to ensure the public brings the water to a proper boil, and not to stop boiling just because there are bubbles in the water. Electric kettles with auto shut off are activated at 100°C and the water is safe to drink. Scale formation in the kettle should not make a difference to the boiling temperature..