



EMERGENCY DISINFECTION OF DRINKING WATER

USE ONLY WATER THAT HAS BEEN PROPERLY DISINFECTED FOR DRINKING, COOKING, MAKING ANY PREPARED DRINK, OR FOR BRUSHING TEETH

1. Use **bottled water** that has not been exposed to flood waters if it is available.
2. If you don't have bottled water, you should **boil water** to make it safe. Boiling water will kill most types of disease-causing organisms that may be present. If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle, and draw off the clear water for boiling. **Boil the water for one minute**, let it cool, and store it in clean containers with covers.
3. If you can't boil water, you can **disinfect it using household bleach**. Bleach will kill some, but not all, types of disease-causing organisms that may be in the water. If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle, and draw off the clear water for disinfection. **Add 1/8 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 disinfected water in clean containers with covers.
4. If you have a well that has been flooded, the water should be tested and disinfected after flood waters recede. If you suspect that your well may be contaminated, contact your local or state health department or agriculture extension agent for specific advice.

(U.S. federal agencies and the Red Cross recommend these same four steps to disinfect drinking water in an emergency. Please, read the text below for important details about disinfection.)

More information about disinfection

In times of crisis, follow advice from local officials. Local health departments or public water systems may urge consumers to use more caution or to follow additional measures than the information provided here.

Look for other sources of potable water in and around your home. When your home water supply is interrupted by natural or other forms of disaster, you can obtain limited amounts of water by draining your hot water tank or melting ice cubes. In most cases, well water is the preferred source of drinking water. If it is not available and river or lake water must be used, avoid sources containing floating material and water with a dark color or an odor. Generally, flowing water is better quality than stagnant water.

Examine the physical condition of the water. When emergency disinfection is necessary, disinfectants are less effective in cloudy, murky or colored water. Filter murky or colored water through clean cloths or allow it to settle. It is better to both settle *and* filter. After filtering until it is clear, or allowing all dirt and other particles to settle, draw off the clean and clear water for disinfection. Water prepared for disinfection should be stored only in clean, tightly covered, containers, not subject to corrosion.

