

# BOIL WATER ADVISORY

A boil water advisory is a health announcement that the public should boil tap water before drinking it. Water is likely unsafe to drink without taking extra precaution. Follow these instructions for the duration of the advisory.

## BOIL WATER ADVISORY INSTRUCTIONS

- **Boil water.**
  - Fill a pot with water and heat until bubbles come from the bottom of the pot to the top.
  - One the water reaches a rolling boil, boil for **one minute**.
  - Turn off the heat and let the water cool.
  - Pour the water into a clean, sanitized container with a cover for storage.
- **Disinfect water.** If you are unable to boil your water, disinfect it instead.
  - *If tap water is clear:* Add 1/8 teaspoon (8 drops) of unscented household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) or water. Mix well and wait at least 30 minutes before drinking. Store disinfected water in a clean, sanitized container with a cover.
  - *If tap water is cloudy:* Filter water using a clean cloth. Add 1/4 teaspoon (16 drops) or unscented household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) or water. Mix well and wait at least 30 minutes before drinking. Store disinfected water in a clean, sanitized container with a cover.
- **Sanitize containers.**
  - Mix 1 teaspoon of unscented household liquid bleach in 4 cups of water.
  - Pour the sanitizing solution into a clean storage container and shake well. Make sure the solution coats the entire inside of the container.
  - Let the solution sit for at least 30 seconds and then pour the solution out of the container.
  - Let the 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 to get fresh air when using bleach.
- **Water filters.** Boil tap water even if it is filtered. Most kitchen or household water filter **does not** remove bacteria or viruses.
- **Preparing and cooking food.**
  - Wash 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 (coffee, tea, lemonade).
  - Wash food preparation surfaces and utensils with boiled water.
- **Feeding babies and using formula.**
  - Continue to breastfeed if possible.
  - Use ready-to-use baby formula if available.
  - Prepare powdered or concentrated baby formula with bottled, boiled, or disinfected water.
  - Wash and sterilize bottles and nipples before use. If you cannot sterilize bottles, 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.
- **Brushing teeth.** Brush teeth with boiled or bottled water. Do not use untreated tap water.



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- **Bathing and showering.**

- Do not swallow water while bathing or showering.
- Use caution bathing babies or young children. Consider giving them a sponge bath to reduce the chance of swallowing water.

- **Washing dishes.**

- Household dishwashers are generally safe to use if the water reaches a final rinse temperature of at least 150°F or if the dishwasher has a sanitizing cycle.
- To wash dishes by hand, wash and rinse the dishes as normal using hot water. In a separate basin, add 1 teaspoon of unscented household liquid bleach per 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. Give your pet boiled water that has been cooled.

## BOIL WATER ADVISORY INSTRUCTIONS

- Run water through all your taps to flush your pipes.
- Water dispensers and ice makers in refrigerators will need to be cleaned. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

For more information on drinking water safety, visit [www.cdc.gov/healthywater](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater).

## MORE INFORMATION

 [preparedness.health.maryland.gov](http://preparedness.health.maryland.gov)

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*Information adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Drinking Water Advisory Toolbox,  
[www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/dwa-comm-toolbox](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/dwa-comm-toolbox)*