

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BOIL WATER ADVISORIES

WHEN A BOIL WATER ADVISORY HAS BEEN ISSUED

What is a boil water advisory?

A **boil water advisory** is issued when a condition exists that can be corrected by boiling the water before consuming it.

How do I use water during a boil water advisory?

Tap water may be used for laundry and bathing (excluding small children) but **should NOT be used for drinking, making juice and infant formula, cooking, making ice, washing uncooked fruits and vegetables, or brushing teeth**. For these purposes, boiled tap water or water from an alternate source such as commercially bottled water should be used. The tap water should be brought to a rolling boil for at least one (1) minute. If there are children in the home, place the pot on the back burner to avoid burns. Boil only as much water in a pot as you can comfortably lift without spilling. Discard all ice made previously and wash the ice cube trays with boiled tap water. Electric kettles should not be used for boiling water if they have an auto shut-off because they do not keep boiling for a full minute.

Can I take a bath or shower?

Adults and teens may bath or shower with untreated water as long as no water is swallowed. Older children could also be given a bath or shower with a hand held showerhead, avoiding the face. Younger children should be sponge-bathed instead of bathing in a tub because they are likely to swallow tub water.

I have a dishwasher. Is it safe to use?

If your dishwasher has a hot setting, it safely disinfects dishes. If your dishwasher does not have a hot setting, after finishing the cycle, soak dishes for one minute in a solution of 30 ml (1 oz) of unscented bleach mixed with 13.5 litres (3 gallons) of water at room temperature for a least one minute. Let dishes air dry.

How should I wash dishes by hand?

You can use soap and boiled water for washing dishes or, alternatively, wash your dishes in soap and hot tap water and rinse in boiled water, then disinfect with the following solution: 2 ml (½ teaspoon) unscented bleach mixed with 1.0 litres (¼ gallon) of water at room temperature for a least one minute. Let dishes air dry.

Can I do laundry?

Continue doing laundry following your usual practices.

Is tap water safe to fill wading pools for children?

No, tap water is not safe to use in wading pools because small children may get water in their mouth, providing a possibility for infection.

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

No. Filtered water should also be brought to a rolling boil for one minute before drinking or using it for cooking. This applies to all home filtration systems.

My doctor told me I am immunocompromised. What should I do?

Always follow the advice of your physician or dietitian. You might be advised to use commercially bottled water or to boil water for drinking or cooking, even when a boil water advisory has not been issued.

How does the medical officer of health decide when to lift a boil water advisory?

The Ontario Drinking Water Standards (ODWS) state that the medical officer of health should continue the boil water advisory until two consecutive sets of samples taken from all parts of the water system show that the standards in the ODWS have been met.

How can I get more information?

Contact the Health Unit at 705-474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808 and ask to speak to a public health inspector.