



Locating Safe Drinking Water

Sources of Drinking Water

One of your most crucial needs is a supply of safe water. Every person in your family needs about 2 quarts of water or other liquids daily (more in hot weather). You also need pure water for preparing foods, brushing teeth and keeping clean.



When warned of a severe storm which could cause flooding or otherwise disrupt water services insure an adequate supply of safe water for your family by filling large clean containers (pots, pans, sinks and bathtubs with water). Then shut the main water valve to protect the clean water already in your water system. If possible, close valves on water lines leaving the house.

You may have emergency sources of water, such as ice cubes. Soft drinks and fruit juices are water substitutes. In addition, the water in your water pipes and toilet tanks (not the bowls) is drinkable if you closed the valve on the main water line before the flood.

To use water still in the pipes, turn on the faucet located in the highest point in the house (usually in an upstairs bathroom). This lets air into the system. Then draw water from the lowest faucet in the house.

Your water heater or water pressure tank could supply 30 to 60 gallons of safe water in an emergency. Before using water from the water heater, switch off the gas or electricity which heats the water. Leaving the heating part on while the heater is empty could cause an explosion or burn out elements. After turning off the gas or electricity open the drain valve at the tank bottom. Don't turn the water heater on again until the water system is back to normal.

Rain water, spring water, and water from streams, rivers, lakes and coiled garden hoses can be used after it is purified.

Avoid water from water beds as a source for drinking water. Pesticidal chemicals are in the plastic casing of the bed and chemicals have probably been added to the water to prevent the

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growth of algae, fungi and bacteria. The water is safe only for hand-washing and laundering.

Purifying Water

Unless you are absolutely certain your home water supply is not contaminated by flood water, purify all water before using it for drinking, food preparation, brushing teeth or dishwashing. If the water contains sediment or floating material, strain it through a cloth before treating it. Water can be purified by boiling or by chemical treatment.



Boiling

Boil water at a rolling boil for 10 minutes to kill any disease-causing bacteria in the water. Add a pinch of salt to each quart of boiled water to improve the taste.

Chemical Treatment

If water cannot be boiled, treat it chemically.

Chlorine Bleach, such as Clorox or Purex, is a good disinfectant for water. However, check the label to be sure that the active ingredient, sodium hypochlorite, is 5.25%. Do not use bleach which contains fragrances or detergents. With an eye dropper, add 8 drops of bleach per gallon of water (16 if the water is cloudy). Mix bleach thoroughly into the water. Let it stand for 30 minutes. The water should have a slight chlorine odor. If it doesn't, repeat the dose and let the water stand for an additional 15 minutes.

How much bleach to use for purifying water.

Amount of chlorine in bleach	Volume of bleach to add to one quart of water	Volume of bleach to add to one gallon of water
2%	2 tsp	2 Tb plus 2 tsp
4%	1 tsp	1 Tb plus 1 tsp
5%	3/4 tsp	1 Tb
6%	1/2 tsp	2 tsp

NOTE: Household iodine from the medicine chest or first aid kit is not an effective agent for purifying water and is NOT recommended by Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA) or by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Water purification tablets, which are widely available, are also NOT recommended for water purification.

Containers

Store the water in a clean and sanitary glass or plastic container. Plastic containers are good because they are lightweight and unbreakable. Metal containers should be considered as a last resort because they may corrode and give water an unpleasant taste.

Water that local officials report has been contaminated with toxic chemicals or radioactive materials cannot be purified using home decontamination methods.

Facts about Water

Water is the single most abundant substance in the human body, making up to 60% of an adult's weight and up to 80% of an infant's weight.



A person can live several days without food, but just a few days without water. It is second only to air in importance to life.

Because water is so important to human survival, never ration it. Drink at least 2 quarts per day, as long as supplies last, and look for alternative sources.

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