

Precautions to be taken by all households during a Precautionary Drinking Water Advisory (PDWA)

Boil all water used for drinking purposes for at least one (1) minute at a rolling boil prior to use. If you do not wish to boil the water, an alternative water source known to be safe should be used, such as bottled water.

Boiled water should be used for other activities where it may be ingested, including:

- brushing teeth or soaking false teeth;
- washing fruits and vegetables;
- using it for food or drink which will not be subsequently heated; and,
- making ice cubes. Ice made before the drinking water advisory should be discarded.

Under most circumstances, it is not necessary to boil water used for other household purposes, such as laundry and cleaning.

Can I use tap water for dishwashing?

Dishes can be washed in the tap water with dish detergent however after washing, completely immerse the dishes for at least two (2) minutes in a diluted bleach solution (1 tablespoon of unscented bleach per gallon of water or 4 ml of unscented bleach per 1 litre of water). Allow dishes, cutlery, cups, etc. to completely air dry before use.

Note: Do not mix bleach with soaps or detergents.

Can I shower or bathe with this tap water?

- Healthy adults may shower or bathe in the tap water as long as they do not swallow any of it.
- Infants, young children and people who have breaks in skin, recent surgical incisions, open wounds or blisters/sores should be sponge bathed with bottled water or an approved water alternative. Children and patients who are not mentally competent should be supervised when bathing to ensure water is not swallowed.

Can I use appliances directly connected to the water lines?

Refrigerator ice machines and other appliances directly connected to the water lines must not be used while the water advisory is in effect. Once the advisory has been lifted, these appliances need to be flushed, cleaned and sanitized as per manufacturer's directions.

Can I make coffee with the tap water?

If the coffee produced by your coffee maker is at least 72°C for 1 minute, the coffee will be bacteriologically safe. However, non-commercial or domestic-type coffee brewers produce wide variations of water temperatures.

The temperature of the water should be verified using a metal stem-probe thermometer, by running a full cycle of the brewer with water and taking the temperature at a point below the funnel when the decanter is half full. The temperature at this point should be 72°C or higher. The decanter used for filling the brewer with water should not be used for receiving the coffee until after the decanter is washed and sanitized.

If you are not able to take the temperature of the water, use boiled or bottled water to make coffee.

I drank the tap water. Will I get sick?

The majority of people who drink the water will not become sick. The most common symptoms you may experience are very similar to a foodborne illness. The symptoms include diarrhea, stomach cramps, and nausea. If you are concerned, consult your health care provider or contact the local public health unit or HealthLine.

What about shaving?

Yes, you can shave as usual.

What about doing laundry?

Yes, it is safe to do laundry as usual.

Should I give my pets boiled water?

Pets can get some of the same diseases as people. It is a good idea to give pets boiled water that has been cooled.

Do I need to worry about my fish or aquatic pets (e.g. reptiles, frogs)?

Most germs that infect people do not infect reptiles or fish. If your water system is using more chlorine or changing disinfection, be cautious about changing the water in your fish tank or aquarium. Contact your local pet store or veterinarian for more advice.

Is it safe to water my garden and house plants?

You can use tap water for household plants and gardens.

For more information or if you have questions or concerns, please contact:

Public Health Inspection Services
Prairie North Health Region
1-888-298-0202