

# How to use Water During a Boil Water Advisory

The following offers advice on how to use water if a Boil Water Advisory is issued in your community.

## If an Advisory is Issued, What do I do?

Untreated tap water can be used for laundry and bathing (except small children).

**DO NOT** use untreated water for:

- Drinking
- Making infant formula and juices
- Cooking
- Making ice
- Washing fruits or vegetables
- Brushing teeth

Boiled water or bottled water can be used for these tasks.

To ensure water is safe for use, bring water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute; let cool.

To make ice, throw away all ice made earlier and sterilize trays. Use boiled, cooled water in cleaned trays.

## What is Disinfection?

Disinfection is a cleaning process that destroys or prevents the growth of most germs that cause illness.

## Can I use the Water to Wash Hands?

If an Advisory has been issued, wash your hands with warm, running water and soap. Next, you should:

- Dip your hands for a few seconds in a disinfecting solution. To make, put 15 ml (3 tsp) of liquid bleach in 15 litres

(4 gallons) of water. Mix, let stand for at least 15 minutes before using.

- Use alcohol-based hand disinfectants with **more than 60%** alcohol. Wet wipes used for cleaning babies at diaper change tables should not be used.

## Is my Dishwasher Safe to use?

If your dishwasher has a hot setting, it will safely disinfect dishes. If not, soak dishes for 1 minute in a solution of 30 ml (6 tsp) of bleach mixed in 13.5 litres (3.5 gallons) of warm water after finishing the cycle. Let dishes air dry.

## How to Disinfect if Washing by Hand

1. Wash dishes and tableware by hand in warm, soapy, untreated tap water.
2. Rinse under untreated tap water.
3. Disinfect in a bleach-in-water solution. Mix 30 ml of household bleach into 13.5 litres of water and let stand for at least 10 minutes prior to use. Immerse dishes and tableware in this solution for about 1 minute. Allow to air dry.

## Should I Change how I do Laundry?

**No!** Continue doing laundry the way you usually do. If you have to wash sheets heavily soiled with feces, carefully remove soil before you place the sheets in the washer, without much agitation of the cloth. Use rubber gloves when handling heavily soiled sheets.

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### **Is the Water Safe for Wading Pools?**

**No!** The water is not safe to use in wading pools. Water can get into the mouths of small children and cause an infection.

### **Does a Water Filtration Device Make Water Safe for Drinking or Cooking?**

**No!** Bring filtered water to a rolling boil for 1 minute before drinking or cooking.

### **When Does a Boil Water Advisory End?**

The Medical Officer of Health has the final say. As a rule, a Boil Water Advisory is lifted when the original problem has been fixed and two sets of water samples, taken 24-48 hours apart, from all parts of the water system, are "safe to drink".

### **What Should I Do After the Boil Water Advisory Ends?**

1. Run cold water taps and drinking water fountains for at least 1 minute before using the water.
2. Replace water filters used to filter untreated water.
3. Flush all garden hoses by running water for 1 minute.
4. Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
5. Drain and refill hot water heaters.

If you have any questions, please contact Lambton Public Health (519) 383 -8331 or toll-free 1-800-663-1839.