

# How to Purify Water During an Emergency

When drinking water is unavailable, it's an inconvenience for a day or 2, but it becomes a health emergency when water is not available for several days or even longer. It's always a good idea to keep an emergency supply of bottled water on hand to meet your family's needs during these situations. Bottled water may be available in stores, but if other families are in the same situation, the stores may sell out quickly. Knowing how to purify water during an emergency ensures that you and your family have safe drinking water.

## Steps

- 1 Know how to purify water during an emergency.** There are 3 ways you can safely purify water for drinking.
- 2 Boil water.** Boiling water is easy and safe. It's the most common and the best way to purify water.
  - Bring your water to a boil and continue boiling for 8 to 10 minutes.
  - Allow the purified water to cool and then bottle, store or drink it.
  - Use plastic or glass food-grade containers only to store water. Be sure all containers have tight screw-on caps.
- 3 Utilize iodine in small quantities to purify water.**
  - To purify clear-colored water, add 3 drops of iodine to 1 quart (.95 liters) of water. Cloudy or muddy water will need 6 drops of iodine to 1 quart (.95 liters) of water to purify it.
  - Stir the iodine in and let the water settle for about 30 minutes. Filter it before drinking.
- 4 Use liquid chlorine bleach to purify your drinking water.**
  - Only purchase liquid chlorine bleach that contains 5.25 percent of hypochlorite. This is effective to kill bacteria.
  - You can mix 1 gallon (3.75 liters) of clear water with 8 drops of bleach. For cloudy water, use 16 drops of bleach per gallon (3.75 liters) of water.
- 5 Stir or shake well.** Wait at least 30 minutes before drinking or bottling the water.

## Tips

- To improve the taste of boiled water, you can pour water back and forth between 2 glasses before drinking it. This adds oxygen back into the water.
- Some other possible water sources to consider in an emergency include rainwater, rivers, streams, ponds and lakes.
- You can make chemically treated water taste better by adding sugar or a flavored drink mix.
- If you have a limited water supply, use your ice cubes. You can also use the water from your hot-water tank and pipes. When there are no remaining water options, use the water from the toilet tank, but do not use the water from the toilet bowl.

## Warnings

- Do not use water that contains floating material, has an odor or is dark in color.

### Things You'll Need

- Water
- Plastic or glass food-grade containers or bottles
- Iodine
- Liquid chlorine bleach

### Sources and Citations

- <http://www.bae.ncsu.edu/programs/extension/publicat/wqwm/emergwatersuppl.html>
- <http://www.aquatechnology.net/emergencywaterpurification.html>

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