

FLOODS: SAFE DRINKING WATER

FACT SHEET

Your water supply may become contaminated with dirty flood waters. Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled, or treated water. Here are some general rules concerning water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene.

Boiling Water

Boiling water will kill most types of disease-causing organisms that may be present. If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle and then draw off the clear water for boiling.

How to Correctly Disinfect Water

Hold water at a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes to kill bacteria.

If you can't boil water, add 1/8 teaspoon of unscented liquid household bleach per gallon of water. Stir the water well and let it stand for 30 minutes before you use it. The bleach must be free of perfumes, dyes, or other additives.



- Listen to public announcements to find out if your municipal water supply is safe to use.
- If a “boil water” advisory is in effect, do not use tap water unless water has gone through a proper disinfection method (as described below).
- Examine the physical condition of the water. When emergency disinfection is necessary, disinfectants are less effective in cloudy, murky, or colored water.
- Boiling water when practical is the preferred way to kill harmful bacteria and parasites. When boiling water is not practical, you can treat water with unscented household chlorine bleach.
- Use bottled water that has not been exposed to flood waters.
- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula.
- If your individual well, spring, or cistern was flooded, it is likely contaminated and the water will need to be disinfected by boiling or disinfecting.



For more information, contact CCHD's Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program at 452-0881 x310 or visit www.cchdmt.org or www.cdc.gov.