

Purifying Non-Potable Water

In addition to having a bad odor and taste, contaminated water can contain microorganisms that cause diseases such as dysentery, cholera, typhoid and hepatitis. Purify all water of uncertain condition before using it for drinking, food preparation (including cleaning and cooking) or personal hygiene (brushing your teeth, etc.). There are many ways to purify water. Here are two easy purification methods for water that will kill microbes but will not remove other contaminants such as heavy metals, salts, most other chemicals and radioactive fallout.

Boiling Water Method

1. If the water looks cloudy, filter it before purifying. First, let the water sit undisturbed so that any suspended particles settle to the bottom. Then filter the water through layers of clean paper or cotton towels, cheese cloth, or coffee filters.
2. Place the water in a clean saucepan or other cooking container. Bring the water to a rolling boil and continue boiling for 10 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate.
3. Let the water cool before drinking, keeping it covered during cooling.



*Bleach Method

1. If the water looks cloudy, filter it before purifying. First, let the water sit undisturbed so that any suspended particles settle to the bottom. Then filter the water through layers of clean paper or cotton towels, cheese cloth, or coffee filters.
2. Use liquid household chlorine bleach that contains 5.25% – 6% sodium hypochlorite as the only active ingredient. Do not use scented, thickened, or color safe bleaches.
3. Add four drops of bleach per quart of water or 16 drops (or 1/4 teaspoon) of bleach per gallon of water and stir. Let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not slightly taste and smell of chlorine at that point, add another dose and let stand another 15 minutes. Test again.

***The bleach method will not kill parasites such as Cryptosporidium or Giardia. The boiling water method is the best choice to eliminate parasites.**

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