

Instructions for Using Water in the Home During a Boil Water Advisory

During an advisory, it is essential that all water to be used for the following activities be boiled:

- drinking;
- preparing infant formulas;
- preparing juices and ice cubes;
- washing fruits and vegetables;
- cooking; or
- dental hygiene.

Holding water at a rolling boil for at least 1 minute will inactivate all waterborne pathogenic micro-organisms. Water can be boiled either in a pot or kettle on a stove, an electric kettle without an automatic shut-off or in a microwave oven. If water is boiled in a microwave, it is advisable to include a glass rod or wooden or plastic stir stick in the container to provide nucleation sites for bubble formation and energy diffusion. This will prevent the formation of superheated water.

Under most circumstances it is not necessary to boil water used for other household purposes. Adults, adolescents and older children may shower, bathe or wash using tap water but should avoid swallowing the water. Toddlers and infants should be sponge bathed. In non-outbreak situations, dishes and laundry may be washed in tap water, either by hand or by machine.

In the event of a waterborne outbreak as declared by the MOH, it may be necessary to take additional precautions. In this situation, hands should be washed in a dilute solution of household bleach and water (1 mL or 20 drops per litre of water). This is particularly important before preparing or eating meals, and after using the toilet, changing diapers, and handling animals. The solution should be allowed to stand 10 minutes before use. If dishes are hand washed they should be washed and rinsed in hot tap water, soaked in a dilute solution of household bleach (20 mL of bleach in 10 litres of water) for one minute and air dried. Alternatively, dishwashers with a hot water cycle will disinfect dishes.

Additional instructions for businesses, institutions, manufacturing plants or health care facilities that may have special requirements when a boil water advisory is in effect are included in the *Guidelines for Monitoring Public Drinking Water Supplies*. The guidelines are available at

http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/water/docs/Guidelines_for_Monitoring_Public_Drinking_Water_Supplies.pdf or contact the local Department of Environment and Labour.