

Central United States Earthquake Consortium

HOW TO PURIFY WATER FOR DRINKING

If water is polluted with dirt or sediment, strain it into a container through paper towels, paper coffee filters, or several layers of clean cloth to remove any sediment or floating matter. Disinfect the strained water with a 5.25% sodium hypochlorite solution (liquid household chlorine bleach) OR with tincture of iodine. DO NOT use the granular form of household bleach, it is POISONOUS!

To disinfect water, use the following formula:

Amount of water	Amount of chlorine bleach to add:		Amount of tincture of iodine 2% to add:	
	Clear water	Cloudy water	Clear water	Cloudy water
1 quart	2 drops	4 drops	3 drops	6 drops
1 gallon	8 drops	16 drops	12 drops	24 drops
5 gallons	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	¾ teaspoon	1½ teaspoons

NOTE: If liquid chlorine bleach is older than one year, the amount used should be doubled, as it loses strength over time.

Purchase an eye dropper to add bleach or iodine to the water. Use the eye dropper for this purpose ONLY.

Mix well by stirring or shaking the water in a container. Let stand for 30 minutes before using. A slight chlorine odor should be detectable in the water. If not, repeat the dosage and let stand for an additional 15 minutes before using.

If the water can be boiled, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that it be boiled for at least 1 minute. This should remove any harmful bacterial contamination. Check with your local Health Department for local recommendations.

Water purification tablets are available in drug stores and sporting goods stores and are recommended for your first aid kit. Follow the directions on the package to purify water. Water purification tablets have a shelf life of 2 years and lose their effectiveness if they get damp before use.

Purify only enough water at one time to last for 48 hours. This will minimize the chances of re-contamination.

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