



October 2015

Boil Water Notice or Order



What you need to do if your water system has told you to boil your water:

BOIL all your tap water for five minutes before you use it for:

- ❖ Drinking
❖ Brushing your teeth
❖ Making ice
❖ Washing your hands before eating
❖ Washing dishes, cooking surfaces, raw foods or rinsing food
❖ Preparing drinks like baby bottles, Kool-Aid, sun tea, ice tea, frozen juices, etc.
❖ Cooking food like potatoes, pasta, hot dogs, etc.

Why? When tests show that public drinking water may be polluted with microorganisms, such as from human or animal waste, a boil water notice may be issued to make sure that people won't get sick from drinking contaminated water.

How long? Keep using boiled water until the New Mexico Environment Department or your public water system tells you it's safe to use tap water. If you stop using boiled water without first being told that it's safe, you and your family could be at risk for getting sick.



Where do I go to find out about my drinking water? Contact:

- ❖ Your community water system Or
❖ New Mexico Environment Department Drinking Water Bureau
1-877-654-8720 TOLL FREE
https://www.env.nm.gov/dwb

What if I get sick because of contaminants in my drinking water?



- ❖ Seek medical treatment
❖ Contact the New Mexico Department of Health
1-505-827-0006 or 1-505-827-2613
❖ For more information, visit the Department of Health website at:
https://www.nmhealth.org

Tips for Boiling Water

1. Fill a pot with cold water (avoid using water from the hot water tap because it could have high amounts of metals and minerals in it from the water heater)
2. Start timing after the water boils (you may see little bubbles forming at the edges of the pot; these are just air bubbles from the water; when steady streams of big bubbles are sent up from the bottom of the pot, then your water is starting to boil)
3. Boil for five minutes
4. The flat taste of boiled water can be improved by pouring it back and forth from one clean glass into another (called aeration); or by allowing it to stand for a few hours; or by adding a pinch of salt for each quart of water boiled.



Note: Boiling water is the preferred method to get rid of microorganisms.



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Frequently Asked Questions



Question: Who is most at risk for getting sick from microorganisms in water?

Answer: The very young, the very old and people with weakened ability to fight disease or infections due to illness or treatments: these people are most affected by microorganisms.



Question: What are the symptoms of drinking water contaminated by microorganisms?

Answer: You may experience gastrointestinal distress, such as cramps or diarrhea, and consequently dehydration, with symptoms such as headache or fatigue.



Question: What if I have a cut?

Answer: You should use cooled boiled water on open cuts, wounds or sores.



Question: Can I use this water to take a shower?

Answer: Yes, just avoid swallowing shower water.



Question: Should my pets get boiled water too?

Answer: Yes, this is a good idea because pets, such as dogs can get some of the same diseases as humans and can give these diseases to their owners.



Question: Is it OK to water my house plants with this water?

Answer: Yes, it is OK to water your house plants with possibly contaminated tap water without boiling it first.



Question: I have a tap filter or filtering water pitcher: do I still need to use boiled water?

Answer: Yes, you still need to use boiled water. Most pitchers that have a water filter do **not** filter out microorganisms. If you have other filters -- on your refrigerator, on your faucet, or under your sink -- read the package insert to see if the filter removes microorganisms. If in doubt, use boiled water.

Note: Boiling water is the preferred method to get rid of microorganisms.

