

YOUR HEALTH AND YOUR WATER COOLER

York Region Health Services is mandated to promote safe water practices. This fact sheet is part of a series to provide information and standards on this topic.

Why do I need to clean my water cooler?

Water coolers can harbour bacteria, algae, and moulds that affect the taste and appearance of your water but may also cause illness such as vomiting and diarrhea. Regular cleaning and sanitizing of these units can prevent these problems.

Steps for cleaning and sanitizing:

This procedure should be completed with each bottle change.

- If water cooler is refrigerated, unplug cooler unit and remove bottle.
- Empty reservoir by draining any remaining water in dispensing faucet.
- Disassemble cooler unit by removing splashguards, spill trays, water holding reservoir and faucet.
- Clean splashguards, trays and reservoir with soap and water and sanitize using a 100ppm bleach and water solution (one teaspoon (5ml) of household bleach to 4 cups (1L) of water). Allow a contact time of 45 seconds.
- When cleaning faucet area disassemble pipe from tap if possible and clean with soap and water. Sanitize faucet pieces by soaking in the bleach and water solution. Allow a contact time of 45 seconds. A small tap brush can be used to clean internal parts of the tap and pipe.
- Reassemble unit and flush with clean water prior to use.
- Store water cooler in a cool dry place where possible, to prevent algae growth.

Replacing the Bottle:

Wash hands with liquid soap and warm water before handling. Do not handle water cooler if you are feeling ill. Wipe the top and neck of the new bottle with a paper towel dipped in household bleach solution (1 teaspoon (5 ml) of bleach, 4 cups (1L) of water). Rubbing alcohol may also be used, but must be completely evaporated before placing the bottle in the cooler.

For more information you can contact a York Region Public Health Inspector, Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm toll-free at: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 4599.

Revised January 9, 2006

Other York Region Health Service Fact Sheets Available:

Safe Water Fact Sheet #1: Well Disinfection

Safe Water Fact Sheet #2: Emergency Water Treatment

Safe Water Fact Sheet #3: Private Well Water Sampling Procedure

Safe Water Fact Sheet #4: Interpreting Your Well Water Results

Safe Water Fact Sheet #5: Sodium in Drinking Water

Safe Water Fact Sheet #6: Public Health Concerns When Dealing With a Water Shortage

Safe Water Fact Sheet #7: Nitrate in Drinking Water