

Guide to Using Water Safely During a Boil Water Advisory

CHILD CARE FACILITIES

During a Boil Water Advisory (BWA), the water should NOT be used for drinking, food preparation, making infant formula and juices, cooking, making ice, washing fruits or vegetables, or brushing teeth. For these purposes, boiled, bottled or chlorinated water should be used.

Child care facilities should adhere to the following practices during a BWA:

Communication to parents

- o Inform parents of the Boil Water Advisory, symptoms of enteric illness, need for exclusion, reporting requirements, risk of severe illness in immunocompromised persons, and necessary control measures.

Water for drinking

- o Use only bottled or commercially treated water.

To boil water:

The water should be brought to a rapid rolling boil and boiled for one minute. Make ice using boiled, cooled water. Discard all ice made previously and disinfect the ice cube trays.

Note: Chemicals already present in the water will become more concentrated with boiling.

To chlorinate water:

Add 1.25 ml (1/4 teaspoon) of unscented liquid household bleach (such as Javex) to 4 litres (1 gallon) of water. Mix well and allow it to stand for a minimum of 15 minutes.

- o Post signs stating "NOT FOR DRINKING" at all drinking faucets, kitchen areas, and washroom taps to warn against drinking water.
- o Water used as an ingredient in drink mixes must be from a commercially bottled source or treated.

Food preparation

- o Review and follow the *Food Service Establishment Guidelines* (attached).
- o Discard all foods and beverages made with untreated or potentially contaminated water.
- o All water that is used to wash, rinse or soak foods (i.e. fruits and vegetables) must be from a commercially bottled source or treated. Children and staff should not consume raw foods rinsed with water that has not been disinfected.

Exclusion with diarrhea

- o Exclude all children or staff reporting diarrhea until symptoms have subsided for at least 24 hours.
- o Report all illness linked to a community outbreak to the Medical Officer of Health.

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Handwashing

- o Enforce frequent, thorough handwashing for all staff and children. Signs advising of the appropriate handwashing technique should be posted at all sinks. Supervision of children during handwashing should occur.
- o If the Boil Water Advisory has been issued as a precaution and there is no outbreak of human illness, there is no need for additional hand disinfection with bleach solution or alcohol using the measures described below.
- o If the Boil Water Advisory has been issued because of an outbreak of human illness or the presence of a known pathogen (e.g. E. coli or Shigella), hands should be washed with tap water and liquid soap, and rinsed using the following solution:
 - Place approximately 5 ml (1 tsp.) of liquid household bleach in 4.5 L (1 gallon) of water.
 - Mix and let stand for at least 15 minutes before using.
 - Transfer the mixture to smaller, clean containers for use. A one gallon hand pump works well.
 - Hands should not be washed directly in this solution unless wash water is emptied after each use.
 - Label the containers as follows: “Chlorine Bleach Solution. Apply to hands after washing. Do not drink”.
 - This solution must be provided in children’s washrooms, as well as staff washrooms and at all hand basins.
 - Alcohol-based hand disinfectants, containing more than 60% alcohol may be used after washing hands with soap, or in situations where water is not available.

Teeth brushing

- o Use boiled or bottled water for brushing teeth. Ensure that supervision of this activity occurs.

Diapering

- o Use disposable gloves, alcohol/gel rinses and disposable, moistened towelettes when diapering children.
- o Use disposable paper to cover diaper-changing areas.
- o Clean children’s hands with the gel after diapering. Ensure staff wash their hands after each diaper change.
- o If face cloths are used, ensure they are moistened with non-contaminated water then laundered after each use.
- o Use waterproof covering or diapers capable of retaining liquid faeces.
- o After each child has been changed, disinfect diaper-changing areas with a chlorine solution of 100 parts per million (or a solution of equivalent disinfection capability).
- o Ensure clear separation of diapering and food-handling areas, and responsibilities.
- o Ensure separation of diaper-changing areas from children’s play areas.

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Dishwashing

- o Disinfect dishes by washing in dishwashing machines that have a dry cycle or a final rinse. Final rinse exceeds 45°C (113°F) for 20 minutes or 50°C (122°F) for five minutes, or 72°C (162°F) for one minute, or
- o Use single-use, disposable dishware and utensils

Water play stations

- o Stop the use of water play tables during a BWA. Drain all water play tables or play areas containing water.
- o Discourage activities/crafts which utilize water and where there is a risk that children may consume it (e.g. hand painting, baking, pasting with glue made from flour and water).

Washing toys

- o Wash cloth toys or dress up clothes in a washing machine. Dry them in a standard dryer for 30 minutes.
- o Disinfect toys in a disinfectant solution ensuring adequate contact time. Toys may also be cleaned in a dishwasher providing that the machine uses a hot water wash at 60°C (140°F), with a hot water sanitizing rinse of 82°C (180°F) for ten seconds.

Laundry

- o Launder dish cloths, bedding, bibs and facecloths in a standard washing machine provided that a sanitizing rinse or hot rinse cycle is used. Items should be dried in a standard dryer for a minimum of 30 minutes.

Steps to Take After the Boil Water Advisory is Lifted

Once the BWA has been lifted, all water-using fixtures or pieces of equipment should be re-started, flushed and sanitized in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. This may vary from fixture to fixture. Water filters, softeners and treatment devices may need to be replaced completely. When re-starting equipment, obtain specific guidance from the facilities engineer and/or the fixture manufacture.

Additional measures that need to be completed are:

- o Run cold faucets for one minute before using the water.
- o Run drinking fountains for one minute before using the water.
- o Backwash pool filters, and change media or water as warranted.
- o Drain and refill hot water heaters set below 45°C (130°F).
- o Drain and refill all water play stations.

Adapted from guidelines contained in the *Protocol for the Investigation and Control of Cryptosporidium and Giardia Waterborne Outbreaks* (1997) and *Cryptosporidium and Water: A Public Health Handbook* (1997).

For more information or to speak with a Public Health Inspector, contact York Region *Health Connection* at **1-800-361-5653** or **TTY 1-866-252-9933**.