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Coping without a private water supply

Who is responsible?

It may be your responsibility. The responsibility for ensuring the sufficiency of any private water supply falls to the relevant person(s). A relevant person(s) is the owner/occupier of the premises supplied; the owner/occupiers where the source is located (e.g. landowner, farmer, neighbour) and any other person who exercises management/control of the source. There should be plans in place to deal with insufficiency, drought, or contamination. **Ask your local authority for advice.**

Use of water for drinking and cooking

If you notice any changes in the quality of your water such as discolouration, taste, odour etc contact your local authority for advice.

Hydration

We all need to keep hydrated and to drink safe water - especially in periods of hot weather. For further advice visit: **NHS Dehydration at:** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/>

Formula feed for babies without a water supply

If you need to prepare formula feed for a baby, it is important to be careful with the water you use.

Bottled water should be brought to a boil and left covered to cool for no more than half an hour, and you should then follow the manufacturer's instructions on making up the feed. The prepared feed should then be used immediately. Alternatively you can use ready-made formula milk.

Any bottled water provided from the water company will be safe to use for baby feed once boiled. If you buy your own bottled water, please check the mineral content as some bottled water (especially those labelled mineral water) may have a high sodium content. Look at the label for sodium or 'Na' and check its level is not higher than 200mg per litre. If it is, then try to use another provider. If no other water is available then use this water for as short a time as possible. It is important to keep babies hydrated.

Bathing children

If your supply has been deemed unsafe for drinking then it is safer not to use this for bathing infants as they may consume water during bathing. In this situation bottled water is an alternative. Baby wipes can also be used for hand cleansing and washing infants.

Boiling tap water for use in the home

If you have been advised to boil your tap water, this will be for drinking, brushing teeth and for food preparation. This water should be brought to a boil and then allowed to cool before it is used. Do not store large quantities of boiled water in open containers, such as bins, as they may become contaminated over time.

It is safe to use unboiled water to prepare food that is to be cooked, and for cooking if it will be boiled during the cooking process. Do not use unboiled tap water when preparing food that is not going to be cooked such as fruit or salad.

Boiling water can scald, so it is safer to use a kettle rather than pots and pans. If you must, use pots and pans then take care with young children and vulnerable people. Keep panhandles turned inwards so that children cannot reach them.

Water from the hot tap is not suitable for drinking in any circumstance.

Hand washing

Washing your hands is one of the easiest ways to protect yourself and others from illnesses such as food poisoning and flu. If you do not have immediate access to soap and water then use alcohol-based hand rub if available. For more information visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

Cleaning contact lenses

Do not put contact lenses into water, boiled or otherwise treated as this can lead to eye infections.

Cleaning water containers

If you are using water containers to transport water make sure they are clean. Use an appropriately diluted bleach solution or sterilising tablets, following the manufacturer's instructions, to clean containers such as bowls and buckets.

How do I flush the toilet?

With restrictions in water supply there may be insufficient water for flushing toilets. It is therefore important that all water used for washing, bathing, and from cooking (i.e. water from boiled vegetables) or washing up is saved in buckets to be used for flushing. It is not necessary to flush the toilet after urination. Other sources of water, for example, from garden water butts can also be used for flushing.

What if the toilet can't be flushed at all because of blockage?

It may be possible and practicable to use the facilities of unaffected family, friends, neighbours, public toilets, rest centres, local shops, supermarkets and hotels. Consider use of chemical toilets ("portaloos").

<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/environmental-public-health/extreme-weather-events/>