

## **PERSONAL HYGIENE DURING A BOIL WATER ADVISORY**

### **Can tap water be used to wash hands?**

Yes, tap water can be used for handwashing, but an alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be applied to hands afterwards.

- Wash hands with warm tap water and soap; lather for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse hands well under running water and dry them with a paper towel.
- When hands are dry, apply an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol.

### **Can tap water be used for showering or bathing?**

Yes. Residents may take showers or baths with tap water, but must be careful to avoid the face, and avoid swallowing any of the water.

- The use of hand-held showerheads is recommended to assist with this concern.
- Open wounds, cuts, blisters, or recent surgical wounds must be covered with a waterproof covering prior to showering or bathing, and care must be taken not to contaminate these areas during bathing, showering, or towel-bathing.
- Pre-boiled water, sterile water, or water from a safe alternative source may also be used if towel-bathing is required.
- Residents with weakened immune systems may require special consideration; discuss with physician.

### **Can tap water be used for brushing teeth?**

No. During a boil water advisory, tap water is NOT safe for brushing teeth.

- Only pre-boiled water that is cooled, bottled water, or water from another safe source may be used for brushing teeth.

### **Reference:**

Best Practices for Hand Hygiene in All Health Care Settings: [https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/B/2014/bp-hand-hygiene.pdf?sc\\_lang=en](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/B/2014/bp-hand-hygiene.pdf?sc_lang=en)