

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