



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health

Drinking Water Safety

Flooding is the most common disaster in the U.S. and can cause a variety of problems to urban and rural communities. However, by utilizing these suggestions, you can learn how to stay safe before, during and after a flood.

THINGS YOU SHOULD DO

- Listen for announcements from local officials to find out what to do. They will tell you if there are germs/chemicals in the water.
- Boil water if instructed. Boil water for at least 1 minute after water comes to a constant boil. Let water cool before drinking. Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers.
- When in doubt, use bottled water. Sometimes there may be chemicals/materials in water that boiling cannot remove.
- Store at least 1 gallon, per person, per day, of water.
- If you become ill after drinking contaminated water, seek medical attention. Traditional symptoms from drinking unsafe water include upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, cramps and headaches.

THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER DO

- Never drink the water unless you know it is safe.
- Never wash dishes, utensils, toys or other objects in the water unless you know it is safe.
- Never bathe in the water unless you know it is safe.
- Never cook with the water unless you know it is safe.
- Never brush your teeth with the water unless you know it is safe.
- Never use the water to make ice unless you know it is safe.
- If using bleach to help make water safe to use, do not use bleach with added scent (like lemon).
- Never mix bleach with ammonia and/or other cleaners.



WELL WATER

A drinking water well can become contaminated with bacteria and/or chemicals during flooding. If your well is not properly sealed and protected, it can become contaminated at any time.

If contamination is suspected, contact your local public health unit or the North Dakota Department of Health for advice. You will need to test well water before drinking it. Until testing shows your water is safe to drink, use boiled or bottled water.

If it is determined you must clean your drinking water well and you've flushed the system to remove chlorine, a water sample should be submitted to a lab for analysis. Do not drink the water until you get a satisfactory test result showing water is free from harmful bacteria.

SOURCE: CDC, ND Department of Health, FEMA,



Make Water Safe

After a natural disaster, water may not be safe to drink.

Listen to local officials to find out if your water is safe.

Adding some bleach helps make water safe to use.



If tap water is clear:

- Use bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon).
 - » For 5-6% household liquid chlorine bleach - add a little less than 1/8 teaspoon (8 drops or about 0.5 milliliters) to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
 - » For 8.25% household liquid chlorine bleach - add a little less than 1/8 teaspoon (6 drops or about 0.5 milliliters) of to 1 gallon (16 cups of water).
- Mix well and wait at least 30 minutes or more before using.



If tap water is cloudy:

- Use bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon).
 - » For 5-6% household liquid chlorine bleach - add a little less than 1/4 teaspoon (16 drops or about 1 milliliter) of household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
 - » For 8.25% household liquid chlorine bleach - add 12 drops (or about 1 milliliter) to each 1 gallon (16 cups or water).
- Mix well and wait at least 30 minutes or more before using.



Remember that containers may need to be cleaned and sanitized before using them to store safe water:

1. Clean the container and rinse it out.
2. Use bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon).
3. Add 1 teaspoon (64 drops or 5 milliliters) of household liquid bleach to 1 quart (32oz, 4 cups, or about 1 liter) of water.
4. Pour this into a clean storage container, cover tightly, and shake well. Make sure the solution coats the entire inside of the container.
5. Let sit at least 30 seconds, and then pour out solution.
6. Let air dry OR rinse with clean water that has already been made safe, if available.
7. Pour clean water into the sanitized container and cover with a tight lid.



■ **Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners.**

■ **Open windows and doors to get fresh air when you use bleach.**

For more information on making water safe after a natural disaster, please visit www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/drinking/making-water-safe.html



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention