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| Drinking water after a flood |
| Information on when and how to safely drink water after a flood  |
| OFFICIAL |



After a flood, your water provider will advise you whether your tap water is safe to drink. They may issue a:

**Do not drink advisory**: Your water has harmful chemicals and toxins and drinking it can make you very sick.

**Boil water advisory**: Your water could have germs and you must boil water before use. Drinking unboiled water can make you sick.

# **What to do if you cannot drink tap water**

You cannot drink tap water if your water agency has issued a ‘Do not drink advisory’.

* You should:
* not drink tap water from the affected area
* not boil, treat water with chlorine or bleach as it will not make it safe.
* Use bottled water for drinking, preparing food, beverages, and baby formula, making ice, brushing teeth or pet’s drinking water.
* In some situations, you can use the tap water to flush toilets, wash your hands, shower (ensure water is not ingested) and wash clothes. Stop using the water and contact your doctor if you experience any skin irritation or any other reaction.
* Your water provider will let you know when it is safe to drink your tap water.

# **What to do if you need to boil tap water**

If your water supplier has issued a ‘Boil water advisory’ you need to boil your tap water.

* To boil your tap water so that it is safe to drink:
* bring water to a rolling boil until you see lots of bubbles from the bottom of pot or kettle for a continued time.
* cool the water before use.
* kettles with automatic cut-off switches are suitable. Variable temperature kettles should be set to boil.
* store boiled water in a clean and closed container
* cool the water before use
* care should be taken to avoid scalding injuries.
* Boiled water should be used for drinking, preparing food, beverages, and baby formula; making ice; brushing teeth and pet’s drinking water.
* Unboiled water can be used for washing hands, showering (ensure water is not ingested), flushing toilets, washing dishes and clothes and gardening or hosing down outdoors.
* Your water provider will let you know when it is safe to drink your tap water without boiling.

# **Get help**

* Contact your water supplier for information <www.water.vic.gov.au/water-industry-and-customers/know-your-water-corporation>.
* If you are concerned that you may have consumed contaminated water or experience gastro-like symptoms, contact your doctor.

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