

The Public Health Agency (PHA) advises the public to boil emergency water collected from standpipes and bowsers during water shortages. This is particularly important where water is used for direct consumption, for example drinking, brushing teeth, making up baby formula and ice cubes.

Although the quality of the water is wholesome, the cleanliness of containers used to collect the water cannot be guaranteed. As a precautionary measure, people should boil and cool the water if they are going to use it for drinking, brushing teeth, to make ice cubes and other similar uses.

It is important that bottles and containers used to collect water are clean and suitable for containing drinking water. Don't use anything that previously contained products that can't be consumed as washing may not remove all of the previous product.

It is also important to maintain good hand hygiene, particularly before cooking food and eating and after using the toilet and changing nappies. The very young and elderly are particularly vulnerable. The PHA recommends the following advice:

- use any water you have for hand washing first before you use it for showering or bathing;
- use antibacterial hand gels or wipes, if you have them, if you don't have water immediately available to wash hands;
- to conserve water you can use disinfectant wipes to clean kitchen and bathroom areas in particular;
- be extra vigilant in supervising small children to keep their hands clean too.

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