

## **PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN ADVISED THAT YOUR DRINKING WATER MAY BE CONTAMINATED WITH BACTERIA**

**BACKGROUND:** Recent tests have indicated the presence of bacteria in your drinking water. The following are precautions you can take:

1. **DRINKING WATER:** There are two simple and effective methods you can use to treat drinking water for microbiological contaminants.
  - a. **Boiling:** Bring the water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute. Laboratory data show this is adequate to make the water safe for drinking.

**OR**

  - b. **Disinfectant:** Disinfectant tablets obtained from a wilderness store or Pharmacy may be used. In an emergency, liquid chlorine bleach such as Clorox or Purex can be used at a dose of 8 drops (or 1/8 teaspoon) of bleach to each gallon of water. **(Careful measurement with a clean dropper or other accurate measuring device is required when using liquid chlorine bleach).** Let stand for at least 30 minutes before use. Read the label to see that the bleach has 5-6% available chlorine.
2. **WASHING DISHES:** It is best to use disposable tableware during the time the water needs disinfection. If that is not possible, the following steps should be taken:
  - a. **Washed dishes:** Should be rinsed in a solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach, as mentioned above, in a gallon of warm water (submersion in a dishpan for a minimum of 5 minutes is advised). The dishes should be allowed to air dry. Gloves should be worn when handling bleach to minimize any skin irritation.
  - b. **Rinsed Dishes:** Because of the many variables involved with dishes washed in a dishwasher, we recommend that you use the additional rinse step as described above.
3. **OTHER WATER USE CONSIDERATIONS:**
  - a. **Bathing:** Young children should be given sponge baths rather than put in a bathtub where they might ingest the tap water. Adults or children should take care not to swallow water when showering.
  - b. **Brushing your teeth:** Only disinfected or boiled water should be used for brushing your teeth.
  - c. **Ice:** Ice cubes are not safe unless made with disinfected or boiled water. The freezing process does not kill the bacteria or other microorganisms.
  - d. **Washing fruit and vegetables:** Use only disinfected or boiled water to wash fruits or vegetables that are to be eaten raw.
  - e. **Hand Washing:** Only boiled or disinfected water should be used for hand washing.
  - f. **Cooking:** Bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute before adding food.
  - g. **Infants:** For infants use only prepared canned baby formula that is not condensed and does not require added water. Do not use powdered formulas prepared with contaminated water.
  - h. **House Plants and Garden:** Water can be used without treatment for watering household plants and garden plants. The exception would be things like strawberries or tomatoes where the water would contact the edible fruit.