There's a boil advisory in your area.

It's unsettling to turn on the tap and not trust it. The good news: clean water is easy to manage once you know the steps. Here's what to drink, what to skip, and how to keep enough on hand.

READ FIRST

If any of these happen, act first

! **A boil-water advisory is in effect.**
Bring water to a full rolling boil for at least one minute before drinking, cooking, brushing teeth, or making ice — per the CDC. A filter pitcher doesn't make advisory water safe.

FREE, RIGHT NOW

Start with these — they cost nothing

- [ ] Fill containers now
  fill clean jugs, pots, and even the bathtub before the pressure drops.
- [ ] Boil tap water to make it safe
  a rolling boil for one minute (three if you live up high) kills germs. Let it cool before using.
- [ ] Use safe water for the basics
  drink, cook, and brush teeth only with bottled or boiled water.
- [ ] Save the good water for drinking
  use stored tap water for flushing toilets and washing, and keep bottled water for drinking.
- [ ] Plan a gallon per person, per day
  that covers drinking and basic cooking. Add more for pets and hot weather.

UNDER 12 HOURS

Store and treat what you need

- [ ] Fill every clean container you have — jugs, pots, pitchers, and the bathtub — while pressure is good.
- [ ] Bring water to a rolling boil for one full minute (three minutes above 6,500 feet), then cool it.
- [ ] Set aside boiled or bottled water for drinking, cooking, and brushing teeth.
- [ ] Plan about one gallon per person per day, plus extra for pets and hot weather.
- [ ] Dump the ice your machine already made and switch the ice maker off for now.

12–48 HOURS

Stretch your supply

- [ ] Use paper plates, cups, and utensils to avoid washing dishes.
- [ ] Keep hand sanitizer by the sink so you're not using clean water to wash hands all day.

General guidance for household planning — not professional advice. In an emergency, follow your local authorities and call 911.

- [ ] Use stored tap water (not your drinking water) for flushing toilets and cleaning.
- [ ] Refill containers whenever the tap is running, in case pressure drops again.
- [ ] Label your safe-water containers so no one drinks from the wrong jug.

48 HOURS AND BEYOND

Treat your own water

- [ ] If the advisory drags on, a filter lets you safely treat rain, creek, or questionable tap water.
- [ ] Keep boiling as your backup as long as you have a pot and fuel.
- [ ] Watch for the official all-clear before you drink straight from the tap again.
- [ ] When it lifts, run the cold taps a few minutes and flush the heater and ice maker before using them.

KNOW THE LINE

When it’s more than an inconvenience

- **Call 911: Signs of severe dehydration: no urine for hours, sunken eyes, confusion, or a racing pulse.**
- **Call 911: Someone you can't wake up, or a fever over 102°F that fluids aren't touching.**
- **Call 911: Someone drank water that's under a contamination advisory — Poison Help is 1-800-222-1222, or 911 if they're unresponsive.**
- **Leave: The outage is stretching past a couple of days, you're out of stored water, and there's no distribution point you can reach.**
- **Leave: Someone in the house needs reliable water for medical reasons — dialysis prep, feeding an infant formula — and you can't secure enough that's safe.**

WORTH KNOWING

Easy mistakes to avoid

- **Drinking the pool**
  Pool water carries algaecides and concentrated chemicals that boiling won't remove. It's fine for flushing toilets — that's its emergency job.
- **Trusting the fridge's water line during an advisory**
  The fridge dispenser and ice maker draw from the same compromised supply. Skip both until the all-clear, then flush and swap the filter — per CDC guidance.
- **Spending drinking water on flushing**
  Toilets flush fine with pool water, rain barrel water, or the murky stuff. Save the clean water for people.
- **Waiting until the taps sputter to fill containers**
  The moment a disruption looks likely, fill the bathtub, pots, and every clean container. Water you caught early is water you don't have to find later.

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