

Finding Other Water Sources in an Emergency



DO NOT DRINK water that has an unusual odor or color, or that you suspect might be contaminated with fuel or toxic chemicals. This water **cannot** be made safe, so you must find a different source of water for your needs.

Other sources of clean and safe water can be found inside and outside the home. The following are possible sources of water:

Inside the Home

- Water from your home's tap water heater tank. This refers to the tank that connects to the water that comes out of your faucets and showerheads. (This is different than the tank used to supply hot water to radiators in older homes. In these homes, be sure to use the tap water heater tank, not the home heating system tank.)
- Melted ice cubes made with water that was not contaminated
- Water from your home's toilet tank (not from the bowl), if it is clear and has not been chemically treated with toilet cleaners such as those that change the color of the water
- Liquid from canned fruit and vegetables
- Water from swimming pools and spas can be used for personal hygiene, cleaning, and related uses, but not for drinking.

Listen to reports from local officials for advice on water precautions in your home. It may be necessary to shut off the main water valve to your home to prevent contaminants from entering pipes in your home.

Outside the Home

Rivers, streams, and lakes might be contaminated with livestock waste, human sewage, chemicals, and other contaminants which can lead to illness when used for drinking, bathing, and other hygiene activities. During flood events, well water might be contaminated as well.

Water from sources outside the home must be treated as described in [Make Water Safe](#), to kill harmful germs. If you suspect or know the water is contaminated with toxic chemicals or fuels, it cannot be made safe and you should not drink or bathe in this water.

Possible sources of water that could be made safe by treatment include:

- Rainwater
- Streams, rivers, and other moving bodies of water

- Ponds and lakes
- Natural springs

Note: DO NOT USE water that has been contaminated by fuel or toxic chemicals.

More Information

[CDC. Rainwater Collection](#)

[CDC. Healthy Housing Reference Manual](#)