

## FACT SHEET

### NORTHWESTERN HEALTH UNIT EMERGENCY WATER TREATMENT

#### **Can water be taken from surface sources?**

Water that is obtained from surface water sources such as lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and ponds is considered NOT SAFE FOR DRINKING and must be treated.

#### **How do I treat water?**

*Boil it:* Boil the water for 1 minute. After it is cooled, pour the water repeatedly from one container to another to eliminate the flat taste.

#### **Or**

*Chlorinate it:* Add 1.25 mL (1/4 teaspoon) of regular liquid household bleach (such as Javex) to 3.8 litres (1 gallon) of water. Mix well and allow to stand for 15 minutes.

**DO NOT** use scented bleaches, coloursafe bleaches or bleaches with added cleansers.

#### **Where should I store treated water?**

Water should be stored in clean/disinfected beverage bottles. Use a 1:10 (bleach:water) dilution to disinfect all beverage containers. Do not drink the solution. Select safe water containers and **DO NOT** use empty bleach, detergent or milk jugs.

*Suggestions:* Use soft drink bottles such as 2-litre soda bottles with tight fitting screw cap lids. The container must be of "Food-Grade" plastic. One can also purchase plastic containers at a camping supply store.

#### **How long can I store it?**

Water kept in well-sealed containers can be kept for at least six months (commercial water can be kept for a year). Write the fill date on each container so that you will remember when to replace the water.

To increase the shelf life of water, store in a cool dark place and group the containers together in dark plastic bags to keep out the light.

#### **How much water do I need?**

As a general guideline:

Drinking water (Adult)      —————>      ½ gal/person/day or 1.9 litres/person/day  
Drinking water (Child)      —————>      0.26 gal/person/day or 1.0 litre/person/day

Additional water needed for  
brushing teeth, bathing,  
cleaning utensils, etc.:      —————>      1 gal/person/day or 3.8 litres/person/day

For further information, contact the Northwestern Health Unit