

Boiling: Boiling is the safest method of treating water. In a large pot or kettle, bring water to a rolling boil for one full minute, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking.

Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers. This also will improve the taste of stored water.

Chlorination: You can use household liquid bleach to kill microorganisms. Use only regular household liquid bleach that contains 5.25 to 6.0 percent sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented bleaches, color safe bleaches or bleaches with added cleaners.

Add 16 drops (1/8 teaspoon) of bleach per gallon of water, stir and let stand for 30 minutes. The water should have a slight bleach odor. If it doesn't, then repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes. If it still does not smell of chlorine, discard it and find another source of water.

Other chemicals, such as iodine or water treatment products sold in camping or surplus stores that do not contain 5.25 or 6.0 percent sodium hypochlorite as the only active ingredient, are not recommended and should not be used.

Distillation: While boiling and chlorination will kill most microbes in water, distillation will remove microbes (germs) that resist these methods, as well as heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals. Distillation involves boiling water and then collection of only the vapor that condenses. The condensed vapor will not include salt or most other impurities.

To distill, fill a pot halfway with water. Tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right-side-up when the lid is upside-down (make sure the cup is not dangling into the water) and boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid into the cup is distilled.