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Storing water

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Notes for the Large Print Reader

Print page numbers are indicated as:

Page 1

Main text is in Arial typeface, 18 point.

Headings are indicated as:

Heading 1

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Omissions and alterations

Some page layouts have been edited for clarity.

Storing water

Water supplies could be affected in an emergency.
Have a supply of stored water for three days or more.

How much water to store

Keep at least a three-day supply of water. You'll need at least three litres of drinking water per person per day (at least nine litres per person for the three days). This equates to four 2.25 litre soft-drink bottles. This will be enough for drinking and basic hygiene.

You should store more if you can. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double the amount required.

Children, nursing mothers and ill people will also need more.

Be sure to include drinking and clean-up water for your pets. The amount needed will depend on their sizes and the conditions. Remember that pets often drink more water than usual when under stress.

You will need more water if you want to wash, cook or clean with water, or if the emergency is long.

Some parts of New Zealand could be without water for longer than three days during an emergency. Your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group can recommend how much you should store. Find your local Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group at

<https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/find-your-civil-defence-group/>

Water storage options

There are lots of ways you can store emergency water.

- You can prepare your own containers of water in soft-drink bottles. Don't use plastic jugs or cardboard containers that have had milk or fruit juice in them. Milk protein and fruit sugars cannot be removed from these containers.
- You can also fill plastic ice cream containers with water. Label them and keep them in the freezer. These can help keep food cool if the power is off and can also be used for drinking.
- Your hot water cylinder and toilet cistern are valuable sources of water. Check that your hot water cylinder and header tank are well secured. Do not use water from the toilet cistern if you are using chemical toilet cleaners.
- Water storage tanks are also an option. Water storage tanks come in different shapes and sizes. Ask your local council if there are any planning requirements you need to consider before installing a large water tank.

If you use collected rain water, make sure that you disinfect it with household bleach. If you are uncertain about the quality of water, do not drink it.

Find advice on how to keep tank water safe from contamination, including the use of water filters at <https://www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/water-collection-tanks-and-safe-household-water%20>

Prepare containers of water

If you are preparing your own containers of water, follow the directions below.

- If you choose to use your own storage containers, plastic soft-drink bottles are best.

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- Do not use plastic jugs or cardboard containers that have had milk or fruit juice in them. Milk protein and fruit sugars cannot be removed from these containers. They provide an environment for bacterial growth when water is stored in them.
- Do not use glass containers because they can break and are heavy.
- Do not use cardboard containers, because they can leak. These containers are not designed for long-term storage of liquids.
- You can also buy food-grade, water-storage containers from hardware or camping supplies stores.
- Thoroughly clean the containers with hot water. Don't use boiling water as this will destroy the bottle.
- Fill them to the top with regular tap water until it overflows. Add five drops of non-scented liquid

household chlorine bleach per litre to the water. Do not use bleaches that contain added scent or perfume, surfactants or other additives. These can make people sick. Do not drink for at least 30 minutes after disinfecting.

- Tightly close the containers using the original caps. Be careful not to contaminate the caps by touching the inside of them with your fingers.
- Place a date on the outside of the containers so that you know when you filled them. Store them in a cool, dark place.
- Check the bottles every 6 months. You can do this when the clocks change over at daylight savings.
- If the water is not clear, throw it out and refill clean bottles with clean water and bleach.

Commercially bottled water

If you choose to buy commercially bottle water, store it in the original sealed container. Do not open it until you need to use it. Observe and replace according to the expiration or use by date.