



8 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT WATER SAFETY

- 1 Pay attention to boil-water warnings from your band council.** During boil-water advisories or boil-water orders, you should bring your water to a rolling boil for at least one minute. Use only this boiled water for drinking, cooking, making ice cubes, washing fruits and vegetables, and brushing teeth. If you have infants and toddlers, make sure that they do not drink the water while they are having their bath. As of February 2012, there were 112 First Nations communities across Canada under a drinking water advisory.
- 2 Flush your pipes.** If you have piped water and your water service is interrupted at some point, run your cold water tap to flush the line once service resumes. Most of First Nations homes receive piped water.
- 3 Thirteen percent of First Nations homes get their water from wells. If you use well water, maintain the well properly and test your well water regularly.**
 - Run your cold water tap for a few minutes each morning or when the system has not been used for several hours.
 - Use only cold water for drinking, cooking and making baby formula. Hot water may contain toxic metals such as lead.
 - Check your well cap regularly. It should be securely in place and watertight.
 - Test your well at least once per year for coliform bacteria.
 - Test your well water occasionally for inorganic and organic chemical contaminants.
- 4 Thirty-six percent of First Nations homes use a septic tank to handle wastewater. If you have a septic tank, use it properly and maintain it regularly.**
 - Do not pour paints, solvents, thinners, nail polish remover, medicines, or antibiotics down the drain or into your toilet. These chemicals can kill the good bacteria in the septic tank that are required to break down the organic matter in your wastewater.
 - Never put oils, grease, fat, disposable diapers, tampons, condoms, cat box litter, plastics, cigarette filters, eggshells, or other kitchen waste into your septic system. These solids can block your system and shorten its life.
 - If your septic tank has effluent filters, clean them out on a regular basis. The timing will depend on the type and size of the filters and the amount of water you use.



