

Drinking Water for Babies

Making water safe to drink

When can my baby have water?

Breast milk or infant formula are a baby's main food and drink for the first 12 months.

Fully breastfed babies do not need any other drinks before six months of age. Babies having infant formula can be given water that has been boiled and cooled before six months of age, if extra fluid is needed, especially in very hot weather.

Around six months of age is a good time to start to offer small amounts of cooled boiled water.

Making water safe to drink

Water given to babies to drink should be boiled to make it germ free.

Make water safe:

- boil water in an electric kettle until it switches off
- if using a stovetop kettle or pot, boil water until it comes to a rolling boil, this is when the water does not stop boiling if stirred.

Cool the boiled water to a safe temperature before giving it to your baby to drink. Store it in a sterilised bottle in the refrigerator.

Town tap water

Town tap water has fluoride in it, which is important for your baby's teeth. But it is not free of germs. It is recommended that:

- town tap water is boiled until your baby is 12 months old
- home filtered tap water is boiled until your baby is 12 months old.

Tank water

Tank water can be at risk of becoming unsafe to drink. Keeping tanks clean and well maintained can lower the risk. It is recommended that:

- tank water is boiled until children are at least three years old.

If you use tank water talk to your dentist about your child's teeth as rain water does not contain fluoride.

For more information on keeping your water tank system safe can be found at

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-enhealth-raintank-cnt.htm

Store bought bottled water

Bottled water is not germ free.

Bottled water is not needed unless in an emergency. Only use if the bottle is unopened or undamaged.

Never use mineral water. It has high levels of salt and minerals, which is not good for your baby's kidneys.

Water boil alerts

If you are living in an area on 'boil alert', even if connected to town water it is important to follow the advice given.

More information and to check if your water supply is on a 'boil alert' are available at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/alerts/standing_health_alerts/permanent_boiled_water_alerts

Want to know more

Ask your GP or child health nurse.