



Iowa Department of Public Health Bureau of Environmental Health Services

FAQ About What to Do After a Drinking Water Advisory (Residential)

When I turn on the faucet, the water sputters. Why?

You have air in your lines. Turn on your tap slowly and run the water until the sputtering stops.

The water is discolored. What should I do?

Flush water pipes by running the water until it is clear.

Why does my water have a strong smell?

The smell is probably chlorine. Often, water systems will increase chlorine levels to disinfect the pipes.

What should I do if my water pressure is low?

Check the faucet screens for trapped particles. Remove the screens and clean out any particles. Put the screens back on the faucet.

Do I need to clean out my faucets?

Yes. You should flush your faucets after the drinking water advisory.

- Turn on the main water valve.
- Turn on the cold water tap at all faucets and run the water until you feel a change in temperature (i.e. the water gets noticeably colder). This may take several minutes. Begin with the faucet that is highest up in your home or building and then open the other faucets one at a time moving from the highest floor to the lowest.
- Turn on the hot water faucets flush the hot water line for a minimum of 15 minutes for a typical household 40-gallon hot water tank or 30 minutes for an 80-gallon hot water tank or larger.

Do I need to clean out my dishwasher?

Yes. After flushing hot water pipes and water heater, run the dishwasher empty one time.

Do I need to clean appliances?

Yes. Read the owner's manual for directions to clean appliances such as water softeners and filter units.

Do I need to do something for the water softener?

Yes. You may need to run through a regeneration cycle. Follow the directions in the owner's manual.

I have a water treatment unit for the house. Does it need special care?

Yes. Change the filter cartridges. Some units need disinfecting. Follow the directions in the unit's owner's manual.

My refrigerator has a water dispenser/ice maker. Do I need to clean them?

Yes. Water dispensers and ice makers are connected to your water line. You need to flush and clean them.

Follow the directions in the owner's manual or:

- Change the filter cartridges.
- Throw out ice.
- Flush the water dispenser for 3 to 5 minutes.
- Run the ice maker for 1 hour.
- Throw out all the ice.
- Wash and sanitize bin areas.