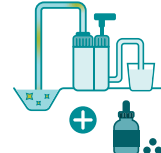


Water Treatment while using the backcountry

When visiting areas with unknown water quality, treat the water to avoid getting sick. For trips into the backcountry that are too long to pack enough water, this resource can help you decide which treatment method or combination of methods you can use to make your water safer to drink.



Boil
(for 1 minute)



Combine filter
(<0.3 micron)
and disinfectant



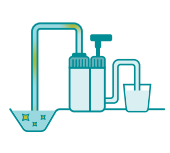
Purifier
(<0.03 micron)



UV light
(in clear water)



Disinfectants¹
(chlorine, iodine,
chlorine dioxide)



Filtration²
(<0.3 micron)

Legend



Effective: will remove or kill this type of germ



Somewhat effective: may remove some germs of this type, but water could still be unsafe



Not effective: will not remove or kill this type of germ

Bacteria

(such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *E. coli*)

Viruses

(such as norovirus, hepatitis A, enterovirus, rotavirus, adenovirus)

Protozoa

(such as *giardia* and *cryptosporidium*)

Recommended treatment



¹ Follow instructions on the treatment product's label, including the contact time for disinfectants.

² Some filters are meant for aesthetic parameters only and not biological pathogens. Make sure manufacturer's product information states efficacy against bacteria, viruses, and/or protozoa.

Keep in mind

- When possible, bring enough water from home for the length of your trip into the backcountry.
- Don't drink untreated water from lakes, rivers, or streams—even if it looks clean.
- There are many ways to effectively treat water.
- If you can't boil your water, the next best option is to combine filter and disinfectant or use a purifier filter.
- Carry at least two water treatment methods in case one fails.

Resources

- [Drinking water in the backcountry](#)
- ahs.ca/eph