

WATER NEWS

The Floods - Is boiling water the answer to safe drinking water?

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The cause of concern for drinking water.

As floods have been devastating parts of Queensland and New South Wales health warnings have been issued by the state governments on the dangers of contaminated water caused by wild weather and flash flooding.

The record levels of heavy downpours have undoubtedly caused severe devastation by flooding homes, cars becoming submerged by water, the breakage of sewer systems and sadly even the loss of life.

Floodwater causes extreme erosion of land and riverbanks, it contaminates water with sediment, chemicals and animal waste. Urban and township areas have seen the water quality dramatically affected as floodwaters pour into sewers, causing them to overflow and wash back into the flooded streets.

Due to the high erosion of surrounding soils, it has been estimated the increase of cloudiness in raw water is up by 100 times the normal level. Turbidity (cloudiness) is caused by solid particles (such as soil, silt and clay) becoming suspended in the water. This, in turn, makes treating the water more difficult as it can clog systems and reduce the effectiveness of water disinfection. Water needs to be clear of turbidity in order for disinfection to be effective. In extreme cases, entire water systems need to be flushed before deeming the local tap water supplies safe to consume. Hence, residents are being urged to check with their local authority and abide by any guidelines set in regards to their water supply.

As reported by multiple news sites and councils across the area, many water treatment plants have not been able to produce water to governed safety standards and have been forced to rely on the water already in their stored tanks and reservoirs. This means many areas are facing water restrictions. Residents of affected areas are warned to be cautious of any drinking supply that significantly loses pressure during this time, as this could mean the clean water has been contaminated with floodwaters. If residents suspect this has occurred, they are being urged to avoid drinking tap water unless they are able to boil it first.

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/water/Pages/drinking-water-quality-and-incidents.aspx>

Clean, treated water must not only be used for drinking water purposes but for washing uncooked food (vegetables, fruit), making ice, cleaning teeth as well as animal drinking water. Anyone in contact with untreated floodwater is at risk of contracting gastro, skin infections, ear, nose and throat infections, conjunctivitis, leptospirosis, melioidosis and tetanus.

A gastro outbreak and widespread pollution of Sydney's Northern Beaches has even forced some closures and the cancellation of surf lifesaving championships due to floodwaters entering and contaminating the ocean.

<https://www.9news.com.au/videos/national/concerns-contaminated-water-led-to-gastro-outbreak-at-lifesaving-event>

Whilst boiling water to make for safer drinking is good practice, it is not always the best solution. In situations where larger amounts of water are required, boiling water may not be the most effective option and certainly does not remove the suspended solids and particles.

The water quality during this time can be unpredictable (becoming contaminated at any time) an under sink water filtration system for residential homes is a simple solution, ensuring the drinking water supplies are indeed safe and treated correctly. The simplest of solutions are; the Hybrid Mini (M1) dual filtration plus UV protection from 99.9% of bacteria and viruses or the PureMix Z6 system with the protection of Ultra Z Technology including 0.1 micron membrane rated for bacterial and viral contaminant removal. Both of these options connect to your existing mixer tap and are ideal for use even long after the effects of the floods with their ability to remove bad taste caused by chlorine.

For whole house solutions (purified water at every tap), the Hybrid G7 is ideal with high capacity, dual filtration stages to reduce sediment, bad taste & odours and protects with UV sterilisation, killing 99.9% of bacteria and viruses. This system can be used for either rainwater or mains water supplies, making it the most popular choice for whole household/facility filtration requirements.

<https://www.puretec.com.au/HYBRID-M1>
<https://www.puretec.com.au/PUREMIX-Z6>
<https://www.puretec.com.au/HYBRID-G7>

Those in the food service industry would also suffer from the impracticality of boiling water and would need to remove any suspended solids to protect their appliances from damage as well as ensuring they continue to provide safe, great-tasting food and beverages.

For the businesses affected by the floods, the CO-UZ150 Ultra Z Filter Cartridge is recommended to be used in conjunction with an existing Puretec food service system which will ensure the water is free from contaminants and sediment with the 0.1 micron membrane rated for bacterial and viral contaminant removal.

<https://www.puretec.com.au/CO-UZ150>

Not knowing how to treat unpredictable flood water can become overwhelming, and we recommend calling the Puretec Customer Care Team for specialist water treatment advice before purchasing any system.

