Summary:

- Follow the guidance from your local public health officials.
- Water that is safe enough to drink is the best option for handwashing. The ideal is to use clean, running water with soap to wash away germs because it is less likely to contain harmful pathogens which can make you sick.
- In case of boil water advisories, you can still wash your hands with soap even before you have boiled the water because it is the soap that kills germs. Note: unless it is a Do Not Use Advisory

There are 3 types of Water Advisories. Water systems and state or local agencies issue these advisories when they have concerns about water contamination. Advisories let people know that tap water could be contaminated and make them sick. Advisories also tell people, schools, hospitals, businesses, and others about the situation and how to take immediate action, if necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Types of Advisories</th>
<th>What they tell you</th>
<th>Guidance for hand washing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A boil water advisory</td>
<td>Boil water before use for at least 1 minute for drinking and cooking purposes.</td>
<td>You should still use your water to wash your hands with soap and water and for personal hygiene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Not Drink Advisory</td>
<td>Use a different water source for drinking or cooking.</td>
<td>Infants and toddlers should be sponge bathed in order to avoid accidentally swallowing the water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Not Use Advisory</td>
<td>Warns not to use tap water for any purpose, including bathing.</td>
<td>Bottled water should be used for hand washing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that says it contains at least 70% alcohol.

• Under a boil water advisory, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that water be brought to a rolling boil for 1 minute before it is consumed in order to kill protozoa, bacteria and viruses.

Context of First Nations in Canada

• First Nations issue drinking water advisories in their communities. Provincial, territorial or local governments issue drinking water advisories off-reserve. In many First Nations communities there are several types of water systems.

• Based on the type of water system, a drinking water advisory could affect one building or the whole community. Some advisories are short-term. They warn residents of a short-term water quality issue on a certain water system.

• Long-term drinking water advisories are those that have been in place for more than 1 year.
Map of Water Advisories in Ontario:

- Click [here](https://www.watertoday.ca/maptest4.asp?province=8) to see how to track water advisories throughout the day across Canada. The website home page includes an interactive map of its water advisories.
- Just click on the province and the list and location of water advisories comes up, as well as how many people affected, and the reason for the advisory. See an example of Ontario for August 27, 2020 to the right:
- Click on this link for current data! [https://www.watertoday.ca/maptest4.asp?province=8](https://www.watertoday.ca/maptest4.asp?province=8)

Risk of COVID-19 Transmission through Water:
During the Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) pandemic, keeping hands clean is especially important to help prevent the virus from spreading. In the case of boil water advisories, you can still wash your hands with soap and water. During the COVID-19 pandemic, you should also wash hands:

- After you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens, etc.
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that’s how germs enter our bodies.

While no major studies have been conducted on the lifespan of COVID-19 in water, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have said “there is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to people through the water in pools, hot tubs, or water playgrounds.”
Steps for Proper Hand Washing
How to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Follow these steps every time.

✓ Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
✓ Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
✓ Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
✓ Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
✓ Dry your hands using a clean paper towel or air dry them.
✓ Turn off tap using paper towel.

Key Times to Wash Hands
✓ Before, during, and after preparing food
✓ Before eating food
✓ Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
✓ Before and after treating a cut or wound
✓ Before putting on your face covering and after taking it off
✓ After using the toilet
✓ After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
✓ After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
✓ After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
✓ After handling pet food or pet treats
✓ After touching garbage

If you do not have access to running water, wash your hands in a large bowl and then throw out the water from the handwashing bowl after each individual use. Make sure you wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.

How to Use Hand Sanitizer
✓ Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (coin-size amount).
✓ Rub your hands together.
✓ Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.
Liquid Soap vs Bar Soap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>Liquid soap</th>
<th>Bar soap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw material</td>
<td>Synthetic detergent</td>
<td>Vegetable fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning efficacy</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount/handwash</td>
<td>2.3 grams</td>
<td>0.35 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost/handwash</td>
<td>10 times higher</td>
<td>10 times lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon footprint</td>
<td>25% greater than that of bar soap</td>
<td>25% less than that of liquid soap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation cost</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net value</td>
<td>Bar soap is better value ad and better for the planet than Liquid soap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hand Sanitization
Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,

- Sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

Using Water Under a Boil Water Advisory for Different Purposes During COVID-19 Pandemic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General recommendation</td>
<td>● Use bottled or boiled water for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ feeding pets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ brushing teeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ making soups or ice cubes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ washing fruits and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ make infant formula or other drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● If bottled water is not available, bring water to a full rolling boil for 1 minute (at elevations above 6,500 feet, boil for 3 minutes), then allow it to cool before use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Boil tap water even if it is filtered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● For the above-mentioned purposes, do not use water from any appliance connected to your water line, such as ice and water from a refrigerator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Breastfeeding is the best infant feeding option. If you use formula to feed your child, provide ready-to-use formula, if available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● If not available, ensure you use bottled or properly boiled water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Handwashing** | • In many situations, unless otherwise decided by the local public health authorities, you can use tap water and soap to wash hands. Follow the guidance from your local public health officials.  
• Be sure to scrub your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and rinse them well under running water.  
• If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol. |
| **Soap** | • In case of boil water advisories, you can still wash your hands with soap even before you have boiled the water because it is the soap that kills germs.  
• **Note: unless it is a Do Not Use Advisory** |
| **Bathing and showering** | • Be careful not to swallow any water when bathing or showering.  
• Use caution when bathing babies and young children. Consider giving them a sponge bath to reduce the chance of them swallowing water. |
| **Brushing teeth** | • Brush teeth with boiled or bottled water. Do not use untreated tap water. |
| **Washing dishes** | • If possible, use disposable plates, cups, and utensils during a boil water advisory.  
• Household dishwashers generally are safe to use if the water reaches a final rinse temperature of at least 150 degrees Fahrenheit (65.55°Celsius), or if the dishwater has a sanitizing cycle.  
• Sterilize all baby bottles.  

**To wash dishes by hand:**  
• Wash and rinse the dishes as you normally would using hot water.  
• In a separate basin, add 1 teaspoon of unscented household liquid bleach for each gallon of warm water.  
• Soak the rinsed dishes in the water for at least one minute.  
• Let the dishes air dry completely before using again. |
| **Laundry** | • It is safe to wash clothes as usual. |
| **Cleaning** | • Use bottled water, boiled water, or water that has been disinfected with bleach to clean washable toys and surfaces. |
| **Caring for pets** | • Pets can get sick by some of the same germs as people or spread germs to people. Provide bottled or boiled water after it has been cooled for pets to use.  
• If bottled water is not available, bring water to a full rolling boil for 1 minute (at elevations above 6,500 feet, boil for 3 minutes), then allow it to cool before use.  
• Boil tap water even if it is filtered.  
• Do not use water from any appliance connected to your water line, such as ice and water from a refrigerator. |
| **Caring for your garden and houseplants** | • You can use tap water for household plants and gardens. |
References