

Water Precautions

When traveling through areas with less-than-adequate sanitation or with water sources of unknown purity, travelers can reduce the chance of illness by following these precautions:

DO

- Use sealed bottled water or chemically treated, filtered, or boiled water for drinking and for brushing teeth.
- Drink beverages made only with boiled water whenever possible (such as hot tea and coffee). Water boiled for any length of time (even 1 minute), at any altitude, is safe to drink.
- Drink canned, boxed, or commercially bottled carbonated water and drinks. International brands are safest. Beware of unsealed containers that may have been refilled.
- Safely drink beer and wine; however, alcoholic beverages added to other drinks does not render them safe.
- Purify your own water if one of these options is not available. Decide which method to use for water purification and bring along the appropriate equipment.
- Carry safe water with you if you are going out for the day and where availability of safe water is not assured.
- Use boiled water and sterilized containers when preparing infants' formula; breast-feeding remains the safest food source for infants who are still nursing.

DON'T

- Drink tap water or anything mixed with tap water.
- Rinse toothbrush in tap water.
- Use ice unless it is made from boiled, bottled, or purified water (freezing does not kill the organisms that cause diarrhea).
- Assume that water is safe because it is chlorinated; chlorination does not destroy all the organisms that can make you ill.
- Drink from wet cans or bottles—the water on them may be contaminated. (Dry off any wet cans/bottles before opening and clean all surfaces that will have contact with the mouth.)