

Bottled Water or Tap Water

In any disaster, water is in high demand. It is impossible to determine exactly how much water will be needed per household; but, it is suggested that you have at least one gallon of water per person for two to three days. Below are some facts about tap water and bottled water to help you determine what works best for your needs.

Tap Water:

- The public water supply is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Everyone who gets their tap water from a public system is assured of regular testing and certain standards. When testing indicates a problem, corrective actions are instituted.
- Water kept in a plastic container that has already been opened should be replaced at least every three months. Thoroughly wash the container with detergent and water after each use to limit exposure to bacteria or other unhealthy microorganisms that can grow in used and/or inappropriately washed plastic bottles.

Bottled Water:

- Bottled water comes from many sources (springs, wells, surface waters), including many of the same sources where tap water originates. Sometimes the bottled water you purchase is tap water from a municipal water system that has been enhanced in some way.
- Bottled water has an indefinite shelf life if it's produced in accordance with FDA regulations and remains unopened. Expiration dates on bottles are voluntary. It may keep indefinitely; but, it may not smell or taste the same. Always store bottled water in a cool location out of direct sunlight.
- If you have any health condition, it is always best to consult with your physician to be sure bottled water is an appropriate choice.

It is more cost-effective to store tap water; but, there are more concerns/health risks involved if you do not heed the necessary precautions. In the rare event where the public water supply or well may be contaminated during a flood or natural disaster, bottled water may be the best choice. Again, consult with your doctor.

For additional information:

http://datcp.wi.gov/Food/Food_Safety_for_Consumers/Bottled_Water/index.aspx

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/factsheet/com/bottledwater.html>

