

**CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF
DRINKING WATER**

EXTENSION GUIDE NO. 137
Home Economics Series No. 9

Produced and Distributed by

National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services
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Zaria, Nigeria

Published August 1987

Introduction

Water plays valuable role to all living beings and none can survive without it. In fact, one can withstand or tolerate hunger for a longer period than when deprived of water.

Water forms about two thirds of the human body while protein, fat, minerals and carbohydrate form the remaining one third. This justifies the need to drink enough water daily

Efficient and comfortable functioning of human body is largely dependent on the quality of water. Contaminated water when consumed causes diseases such as guinea worm, dysentery, diarrhea and cholera. It is very important that the body fluids are free from disease causing organisms for the body to function very well. Therefore it is essential to ensure that drinking water is very clean and safe for consumption.

How water gets Contaminated

In most rural areas, the three major sources of water are wells, streams and rivers. Other include ponds, rain and tap. These sources can be contaminated in many ways.

- a. Dirty surroundings (rubbish and heaps of dirt) make water unsafe for consumption

Fig .1 Different ways of well-water contamination

- b. Human beings can pollute water sources through many ways such as washing clothes, urinating, excreting in ponds, streams and rivers.

Fig. 2. Contamination of river-water

- c. Grazing animals walking across the stream and river to drink may pass feces or urine into the water thus making it unsafe for consumption.

Fig. 3. Animals can be a source of contamination

Uncovered wells can be contaminated by:-

- i. deposit of dust by the wind
- ii. rainflood and dirty water flowing into the well
- iii. ropes tied to buckets and left lying on the ground (fig. 1)

Tips for preparing water for Drinking

1. Make sure that the sources of water are protected from pollution
2. Dig deep for a well and keep the surroundings clean
3. Provide a good cover for the well
4. Clean the containers for getting and storing water thoroughly before use
5. Provide a good stand near the well for handing the bucket used to fetch water and the rope attached to it.

Fig. 4. An ideal well for good water source

6. Boil water to kill germs, for 10 minutes and filter to remove particles.
7. Wash storage pot thoroughly with soaps, sponge each time before you fill it with water. Cover properly and

keep it in a clean and safe place where animals and household pests cannot have access to it.

Home purification of water

Water needs proper treatment to make it safe for drinking. There are two simple methods on how to treat water for drinking. The methods are boiling and filtering.

1. Use clean containers to get the water
2. If the water is muddy or contains floating particles, allow it to settle down. Then pour gently into another container to separate the particles from the water
3. Boil the water in a clean pot for 5 – 10 minutes.

Fig. 5: It is a good habit to boil any drinking water.

4. Allow it to cool down and filter through a clean filter cloth or filter bag into a clean pot or storage bucket and cover tightly with the lid.

Fig. 6. Filter your boiled water before drinking

5. Use a separate cup for dipping or removing water from the container. Such cups should never be used for drinking so that water is not contaminated with germs from outside.
6. Each member of the family must have his/her own drinking cup. So that we do not infect each other with running disease germs (Tuberculosis) or mouth disease etc.

Fig. 7. Provide separate water drinking cup on the pot.

Care for filtering Materials

The filter cloth or bag must be kept clean if the objectives of safe water is to be achieved.

1. Wash the cloth/bag with soap and clean water. Rinse several times in clean water to be sure that all soap lather is out.
2. Boil the filter cloth/bag for 3 – 5 minutes in clean water occasionally.
3. Dry the cloth/bag properly before putting it away.
4. Store separately from other family clothing
5. Before use, rinse properly with clean water

Tap water is supposed to have been treated with some chemicals to make it safe for drinking. Nevertheless, tap water should be treated to be ensure it is safe for drinking. The treatment however, need not be as intensive as that given to other sources of water.

Occasionally, tap water may be found to contain some particles or what may be considered suspension. When this is noticed, you need to allow the water to settle down and then filter it before use.