



DRINKING WATER WARNING
City of Benton Harbor – Water Treatment Plant Failure
FILTER THEN BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING

AMENDED INFORMATION INCLUDED IN RED AS OF 11-6-20

Due to a **chemical feed** interruption in the treatment process, **bacterial** contamination may have occurred in the water system. Bacteria are generally not harmful and are common throughout our environment. However, a failure of treatment can allow disease causing microbes to get into tap water. Corrective measures are currently being undertaken to correct the situation.

Special notice on lead in drinking water:

Boiled water can concentrate the presence of other chemicals in the water, such as lead. The City of Benton Harbor continues to be under an Action Level Exceedance for lead in drinking water. Residents are advised to continue using a water filter certified to remove lead from the water, or flush their pipes for five minutes to reduce the amount of lead in their drinking water. The Berrien County Health Department continues to provide water filters and replacement cartridges to City residents, free of charge. After the boil water advisory is lifted, it is recommended that the filter cartridge is replaced.

What should I do?

Use filtered or flushed water. Then, boil the water before consuming it. Do not drink the water without boiling it first. Using filtered or flushed water from the tap, bring all water to a boil, let it boil for one minute, and let it cool before using. Filtered/flushed AND boiled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and preparing food. Boiling the water kills bacteria and other organisms that could be harmful to your health. Continue using filtered/flushed AND boiled until further notice.

If possible, using bottled water is also recommended. Bottled water does not need to be boiled before consumption.

What happened? What is being done?

These precautionary actions are being taken due to a problem at the treatment plant. For two hours water was passing through the plant without a critical treatment chemical. Some of this water mixed with properly treated water and made its way into the city distribution system.

Treatment staff has taken other remedial actions such as emptying water out of treatment basins and monitoring water quality. Samples will be collected to determine that the water quality meets the state drinking water standards. We anticipate resolving the problem within two to three days.

This boil water notice shall remain in effect until results from the sampling verify the water is safe to drink and the questionable water has been flushed from the system. **Customers will be advised when the boil water advisory has been lifted.**

When the boil water advisory is lifted, it is recommended that City water customers using a water filter replace the filter cartridge. The Berrien County Health Department will provide City residents a replacement water cartridge free of charge. Residents can obtain a filter or replacement cartridge by:

1. Visiting the Berrien County Health Department Benton Harbor office at 2149 E. Napier Ave., Monday-Friday from 8:30am-5pm.
2. Calling the Berrien County Health Department at 1-800-815-5485 Water Response Hotline to request a replacement filter or cartridge be mailed to your home.
3. Visiting the Spectrum Health Lakeland Center for Better Health at 100 W. Main Street, Benton Harbor. The Center is open Monday-Saturday, but hours of operation vary by day. See shlcenterforbetterhealth.org or call 269.408.2258 for updated business hours.

For more information, please contact Ellis Mitchell, city manager of Benton Harbor at 269-927-8400 or emitchell@bhcity.us. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1(800) 426-4791.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.