

Home Drinking Water Treatment Units



What are home drinking water treatment units?

A variety of home drinking water treatment units are available at retail stores throughout the province to remove or reduce a wide range of contaminants that may be found in tap water. Some of the types of treatment methods available include filtration, ion exchange, reverse osmosis, and distillation.

What should I look for when buying a unit?

Before you buy a unit, you need to know what you are trying to remove from your tap water. Because you are unlikely to find a single unit to remove every type of drinking water contaminant, you must pick a unit that is able to reduce the contaminant(s) you are concerned about. For example, a treatment unit designed to remove chemicals such as trihalomethanes (THMs), lead or chlorine is of no use to you, if you desire to be protected from disease-causing micro-organisms.

Be a wise shopper!

Buy a unit that can reduce the contaminant(s) you are concerned about.

Concerns with home drinking water treatment units

- Units should be used and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions that accompany the unit.
- In activated carbon filter units, microbial growth may result from the build-up of organic matter on the filter. Because of the possibility of microbial growth, the following is recommended:
 - ⇒ Use this type of filter only on municipally treated (i.e. chlorinated) or other water supplies known to be free of microbial contaminants.
 - ⇒ Change filters and maintain the unit as per the manufacturer's recommendations.

What should I do if my community water supply is on a boil water advisory?

Drinking water should be boiled if your community is on a boil water advisory. This includes water that undergoes treatment in a home water treatment unit to remove various chemical contaminants. When the boil water advisory is over, please ensure that the treatment unit is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized.

Is there any way to verify the manufacturers' claims?

There are six ANSI/NSF standards relating to water filtration and treatment units. You can check to see if the unit meets one of these standards. The standards are outlined in the table below:

Standard	Specified Product/Use
ANSI/NSF 42	Drinking Water Treatment Units - Aesthetic Effects These devices deal with contaminants that affect taste, odour or colour of the drinking water. Examples of units include carbon and granular activated charcoal filters.
ANSI/NSF 53	Drinking Water Treatment Devices - Health Effects* These devices can deal with contaminants that can effect human health if found at levels above guideline levels. Examples of units include carbon and granular activated charcoal filters.
ANSI/NSF 55	Ultraviolet Microbiological Water Treatment Systems One class of devices can disinfect microbiologically contaminated water and another class is designed for non-disease causing or nuisance microorganisms only.
ANSI/NSF 58	Reverse Osmosis Drinking Water Treatment Systems Applies to systems where water is forced through a semi-permeable membrane (may include filters certified under ANSI/NSF 42 or 53).
ANSI/NSF 62	Drinking Water Distillation Systems Applies to systems that heat water to the boiling point and collect water as it condenses leaving contaminants behind (e.g. heavy metals).
ANSI/NSF 44	Cation Exchange Water Softeners For the removal of calcium and magnesium ions from the water.

* Be sure that the device can remove the health related contaminant you are concerned about. Not all ANSI/NSF 53 Standards remove all health related contaminants.

Visit:

www.nsf.org

www.ul.com

www.csa-international.org

to see if a treatment unit has been certified to one of these standards.

Where can I find out more?

If you have any questions about drinking water safety, please do not hesitate to contact the Government Service Centre or Regional Health Authority nearest you.



Department of Health and Community Services
Department of Environment and Conservation
Department of Government Services
Regional Health Authorities

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Drinking Water Awareness