

Water Rules

For patients in all buildings at the:

- › **Victoria General (VG) site, QEII**
- › **Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre (NSRC)**

Water Rules

Water rules do not apply to all patients. Depending on your medical condition or illness, your nurses will tell you if you need to follow these rules.

Why do some patients in the hospital have to follow water rules?

- A type of bacteria called Legionella pneumophila (Legionella) is commonly found in water. It is found in freshwater lakes and soil. It is also sometimes found in the plumbing systems of large, old buildings like hospitals or hotels.
- This bacteria rarely makes healthy people sick. But some illnesses and treatments make it harder for your body to fight infection.
- If you breathe in these bacteria, they may cause a type of lung infection called Legionnaire's disease. This can lead to pneumonia.

- It is common to get a very small amount of water in your lungs when you drink water, shower, or brush your teeth. This is called aspiration. Aspiration is another way Legionella bacteria can get in your lungs.

How can I avoid Legionella bacteria?

Ask nursing staff about the water rules you should follow while in the hospital.

Water rules include:

Bathing:

- Take a bath or sponge bath instead of a shower.
- The nurse will run the water for you. The water should be stopped before you get into the tub.
- Do not use a whirlpool tub.
- Do not fill up the wash basin or sink yourself. Ask a nurse to do this for you.
- Do not wash your hair when you are in the tub or at the sink. Ask a nurse to help you wash your hair.

Bottled water:

Bottled water is supplied by the hospital and tested for Legionella bacteria. Use it for:

- › Drinking
 - › Making ice cubes
 - › Washing fresh fruit and vegetables before eating
 - › Brushing your teeth or dentures
 - › Adding water to your mouthwash
 - › Rinsing out your mouth
- When taking medication(s), only use bottled water, juice, milk, or canned/bottled pop that the hospital gives you.
 - **Do not drink fountain pop or use ice machines from the cafeteria/in the building, as they are made from tap water.**

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

- It is safe to eat and drink everything that comes on your meal tray.
- You may drink tea and coffee from the hospital cafeterias.
- You may use tap water to make tea or coffee on the nursing units. **Wait for the water to come to a full, rolling boil.** Boiling water kills Legionella bacteria.
- It is safe to use the sink to wash your hands after using the washroom. Be careful not to breathe in sprayed tap water or mist while washing.
- **Do not use clothes washers or dryers on the nursing units.**

It is very important for your health that you follow these rules while in the hospital.

Please ask your nurse if you have any questions or concerns. An Infection Control Practitioner is also available to talk about these rules with you.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.