WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A WATER FILTER AND A PURIFIER?

A filter removes bacteria and protozoa. A purifier also covers viruses. CDC says portable filters do not remove viruses, so add a disinfectant after filtering or choose a device rated for viruses. Check the maker's claim before you rely on it, and boil clear water for one minute as a backup.

THE STEPS

01 Know your source. Clear mountain stream water is a common filter use. Surface water that might hold sewage calls for a purifier or a disinfectant.

02 Read the maker's virus claim. Sawyer Squeeze is listed for protozoa and bacteria only; a purifier is the kind of device rated for viruses.

03 Add a disinfectant after filtering if the device does not cover viruses (CDC).

04 As a backup, bring clear water to a rolling boil for 1 minute, or 3 minutes above 6,500 feet (CDC).

05 Or use plain bleach: 8 drops per gallon, double if cloudy or very cold, and wait 30 minutes (CDC).

THE CHECKLIST

- ☐ A filter or purifier matched to your source
- ☐ Plain bleach and a dropper
- ☐ A pot for boiling
- ☐ Clean storage containers

Sources: CDC, Making Water Safe in an Emergency; Ready.gov, Water. Last reviewed November 17, 2026. General planning information, not medical, legal or financial advice.