



Selecting a Drinking Water Container for Household Use

Use this checklist to select the best water container option for your situation.

NOTE: Most containers will not be perfect, but the more boxes ticked, the better!

What will the water container be used for?

Evaluate your drinking water container using the characteristics in the sections that apply.

Collect, store, and dispense treated water				Only collect treated water				Store and dispense treated water			
Sections	1	2	3	Sections 1		2	3	Sections	1	2	3

How will you reduce the risk of recontamination?

- Educate households to clean their container before every use or once a day
- Educate households on how to properly clean their container (see procedures below)
- Provide households with, or ensure supply chain of cleaning materials, including low-abrasive brush, sponge or cloth, soap and chlorine
- Educate households to replace old, scratched and damaged containers
- Educate households to store only treated water in containers

Section 1: Ideal characteristics for all water containers

☒	Tight fitting lid	Less opportunity for contamination
☒	Easy to clean	Smooth material; opening large enough to insert hand to clean inside; easy to wipe all surfaces inside and out
☒	Adequate opening for filling	Small enough to discourage dipping cups, but large enough for cleaning (about 10 cm) Reduces growth of algae
☒	Opaque (non-transparent)	Resists tipping over, even when empty
☒	Stable	Stands up to heavy use
☒	Durable	Less opportunity for contamination, leaks
☒	No cracks or damage	Food grade material and never used for storage of
☒	Food safe material	inedible products New or used less than six months
☒	New material	Locally available, acceptable and affordable
☒	Access	

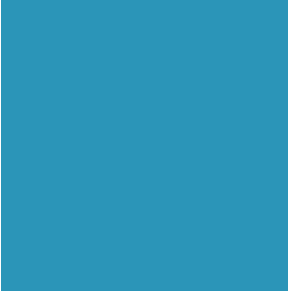
Section 2: Containers used to collect water

☒	Handle(s)	Easier to carry
☒	Small Capacity (20 L or less)	Not too heavy when full
☒	Convenient shape for transport	e.g.: Comfortable for carrying on head or rectangular shape for transporting on motorcycle or by wheelbarrow

Section 3: Containers used for storing and dispensing drinking water

☒	Tap	Easy to dispense with minimal contamination
☒	Stable stand	Keeps container off the ground to reduce contamination

Quick Reference Guide to Common Drinking Water Containers for Emergency Settings

	Pros	Cons	Cleaning and Care Recommendations
Collapsible Jerrycan 	• Tight fitting lid • Adequate opening for filling • Stable • No cracks or damage • Food safe material • New material Transport: • Handle(s) • Small capacity (20 L or less) • Convenient shape for transport Storage & Dispensing: • Tap Other: • Collapsible	• Not easy to clean (small opening) • Translucent • Not Durable • Not locally available Storage & Dispensing: • Does not come with a stable stand	For each litre of water used to clean the container, add 25 mL of a 0.5% chlorine solution*. Add this to the container, seal the opening, and shake vigorously 10 times in each of the three directions (up/down, forward/backward, side to side). Then rinse the container with treated water. Because of the plastic construction (Low Density Polyethylene LDPE), it is not recommended to use rocks as a cleaning agent. Keep covered and away from sunlight to avoid algae growth.
Plastic Jerrycan 	• Tight fitting Lid • Adequate opening for filling • Opaque (non-transparent) • Stable • Durable • No cracks or damage • Food safe material • New material • Access Transport: • Handle • Small capacity (20 L or less) • Convenient shape for transport	• Not easy to clean (small opening) Storage & Dispensing: • Does not come with a stable stand • Lack of tap	Add one of the combinations below to the jerrycan and shake vigorously 10 times in each of the three directions (up/down, forward/backward, side to side). Then rinse thoroughly with treated water. • 40 g of pebbles** and 25 mL of a 0.5% chlorine solution* per litre of container • 20 g of sand ** and 25 mL of a 0.5% chlorine solution* per litre of container • Chlorine only: 25 mL of a 0.5% chlorine solution* per litre of container.

	Pros	Cons	Cleaning and Care Recommendations
Plastic bucket with lid 	• Tight fitting lid • Easy to clean • Opaque (non-transparent) • Stable • Durable • No cracks or damage • Food safe material • New material • Access Transport: • Handle(s) • Small capacity (20 L or less)	• Lids are easily lost • Opening is larger than 10 cm allowing for easier recontamination of drinking water Transport: • May not be comfortable to transport Storage & Dispensing: • No tap • Does not come with a stable stand	Use soap and water to scrub the container's inner walls with a gentle abrasive such as a brush, cloth, sponge or rag to remove dirt. Rinse with treated water. Then, for each litre of water used to clean the container, add 25 mL of a 0.5% chlorine solution*. Add this to the container, seal the opening, and shake vigorously 10 times in each of the three directions (up/down, forward/backward, side to side). Finally, rinse thoroughly with treated water.
Oxfam Jerry Bucket 	• Tight fitting lid • Easy to clean • Adequate opening for filling • Opaque (non-transparent) • Stable • Durable • No cracks or damage • Food safe material • New material Transport: • Handle(s) • Small capacity (20 L or less) • Convenient shape for transport Storage & Dispensing: • Tap (can be ordered without)	• Access Storage & Dispensing: • Does not come with a stable stand • Requires a minimum order of 200 containers according to Oxfam Supply Centre website as of August 2021.	

- To learn how to prepare a 0.5% chlorine solution, check the following job aid from CDC:
<https://www.cdc.gov/ebola/media/pdfs/2024/05/cleaning-handwashing-5-percent-liquid-bleach.pdf>
- ** Using pebbles or sand may lead to premature aging of the container.

