

# Personal hygiene during an emergency

## Washing safely without hot water for short periods

If hot water is not available for up to 24 hours then it is appropriate not to wash, unless hygiene is a particular issue. If hygiene is an issue, disposable baby wipe products that are not soap based may be used without water.

## General hygiene

- Place cold water in a bucket, basin or bath

*If electricity is available:*

- Heat water in a kettle, microwave or saucepan, or on an electric hotplate.

*If gas is available:*

- Heat water on gas jets.
- You could use alternative methods of heating water, such as a barbecue or portable camping stove.  
**These appliances should not be used indoors.**
- Add the hot water to the cold water - one volume of hot water to 3 volumes of cold water
- Test the temperature to check it is not too hot, especially for young children, by placing your elbow in the water. The water should feel comfortable and warm on your elbow
- Stand or sit in the shower or bath
- Using a washer, cup or other container, pour water over the area to be washed
- Apply soap sparingly to the area and then wash it off using the rest of the warm water. Alternatively a cold shower may be used.
- Washing hands with soap and cold water for at least 20 seconds is adequate. If you are concerned use an anti-bacterial soap which is readily available in supermarkets.

**Note:** Always supervise young children when heating water and if transporting hot water to another room.