

## MESSAGE BRIEF: DRINKING WATER PURIFICATION AND STORAGE

### BEHAVIOUR TO PROMOTE

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**Drinking water should always come from a clean, safe source, to protect your family's health. Water from rivers, ponds and unmaintained sources should be boiled before drinking. Store clean drinking water in a clean, covered container in your home, away from animals and young children.**

### CONTEXT

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Using safe drinking water and keeping it clean and free of germs is vital for a child's health. It helps to protect children against diarrhoea. Water should come from a safe source (such as a chlorinated piped supply, public standpipe, borehole or protected dug well) and be kept clean by storing it in covered containers that are clean on the inside and outside. Clean drinking water should be stored out of the reach of young children and animals.

If water is drawn from ponds, streams, unprotected springs, wells or tanks, it needs to be purified. Home water treatments can be used such as boiling, filtering, or adding chlorine tablets.

If a family does not have access to an improved, clean water supply point, drinking water should always be boiled. Boiling does not have a lasting effect; if the water is not stored safely it can become contaminated again. So it should be stored in a clean, covered container and used within a few days.

Drinking water should be drawn from storage containers by adults, using a clean cup that has been washed before use. Separate cups should be used for fetching and drinking water.

*Figures* - According to the 2013-14 DHS, only 1.1% of rural households in the DRC currently use an appropriate method of purifying drinking water. Half of those use boiling (0.5%) and half use chlorination (0.6%) methods.

### BARRIERS TO BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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Many rural Congolese families do not have access to clean drinking water because of the lack of infrastructure.

Some people think that if water is clear, without visible suspension, it is safe to drink.

Open defecation around water sources is still prevalent.

Though many people know it is not safe to drink water straight from a lake or river, many consider they have no alternative options. One Aquatab [water purification tablet] costs 50 francs and suffices for 20 litres. So many people cannot afford to use these for all the water they consume.

Many are aware that boiling water is efficient for disinfection, but they do not want or cannot spend the money required for the necessary firewood.

A rural Congolese family is usually large and requires large containers to conserve water to drink, so many will use large basins/buckets which are sold without a hard cover.

### FACILITATING FACTORS AND LEVERS FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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Many families know and understand that it is not good to drink water straight from the river. Some suitable containers to store drinking water are available, such as large bottles and jugs.

A family's drinking water supply can be protected by keeping all domestic animals away from all drinking water sources and from family living areas.

Boiling water should kill all pathogens. Water should be brought to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute to ensure all pathogens are killed, and then allowed to cool.