

Table 3 Recommendations about water consumption for vulnerable groups

Vulnerable group	Water source for consumption				
	Piped water (not desalinated)	Water delivered by tankers (desalinated water from treatment plants) ^a	Piped water desalinated at home	Bottled water	Rooftop-harvested rainwater ^b
Infants ≤ 6 months of age	Should not be consumed, even if boiled	Can be consumed only if water safety is ensured by disinfecting it (for example, by boiling) and storing it safely	Should not be consumed, even if boiled	Can be consumed but must be properly disinfected due to the risk of microbiological contamination ^c	Currently not used for consumption, but may be considered if treated appropriately (with filtration plus disinfection) and stored safely
Children aged 6 months to 5 years	Should not be consumed, even if boiled	Should be consumed only if water safety can be ensured by disinfecting it (for example, by boiling) and storing it safely	Can be consumed after being boiled if safety is ensured by disinfecting and storing safely	Can be consumed but must be properly disinfected due to the risk of microbiological contamination ^c	Currently not used for consumption, but may be considered if treated appropriately (with filtration plus disinfection) and stored safely
Pregnant and lactating women	Should not be consumed, even if boiled	Should be consumed only if water safety can be ensured disinfecting it (for example, by boiling) and by storing safely	Should not be used, even if boiled	Can be consumed but must be properly disinfected due to the risk of microbiological contamination ^c	Currently not used for consumption, but may be considered if treated appropriately (with filtration plus disinfection) and stored safely
Elderly people	Should not be consumed, even if boiled	Should be consumed only if water safety can be ensured by disinfecting it (for example, by boiling) and storing safely	Can be consumed after being boiled if safety is ensured by disinfecting and storing safely	Can be consumed but must be properly disinfected due to the risk of microbiological contamination ^c	Currently not used for consumption, but may be considered if treated appropriately (with filtration plus disinfection) and stored safely

^a It was assumed that water distributed by tankers is desalinated seawater, which suggests that nitrate levels would not be problematic.

^b Rainwater is not a significant source of domestic water but could be considered as a potential alternative source.

^c There are uncertainties regarding the quality of bottled water. There is not enough evidence to document the quality of bottled water currently distributed and consumed in the Gaza Strip.