

Water Facts - from [water.org](http://water.org/learn-about-the-water-crisis/facts/#children) at : <http://water.org/learn-about-the-water-crisis/facts/#children>

Without water, life would not exist. It is a prerequisite for all human and economic development. Yet today, nearly one billion people – about one in eight – lack access to clean water. More than twice that many, 2.5 billion people, don't have access to a toilet.

In most developed nations, we take access to safe water for granted. But this wasn't always the case. A little more than 100 years ago, New York, London and Paris were centers of infectious disease. Child death rates were as high then as they are now in much of Sub-Saharan Africa. It was sweeping reforms in water and sanitation that enabled human progress to leap forward. It should come as no surprise that in 2007, a poll by the British Medical Journal found that clean water and sanitation comprised the most important medical advancement since 1840.

There has been significant public attention paid to the issue of water scarcity lately, and for good reason. Although water is a renewable resource, it is also a finite one. Only 2.53 percent of earth's water is fresh, and some two-thirds of that is locked up in glaciers and permanent snow cover. But despite the very real danger of future global water shortages, for the vast majority of the nearly one billion people without safe drinking water, today's water crisis is not an issue of scarcity, but of access.

The health and economic impacts of today's global water crisis are staggering. More people in the world own cell phones than have access to a toilet. And as cities and slums grow at increasing rates, the situation worsens. Every day, lack of access to clean water and sanitation kills thousands, leaving others with reduced quality of life.

Water

- ∞ 884 million people lack access to safe water supplies; approximately one in eight people.

A bathtub holds 151 L of water. Someone in a slum may only get 30 L for all their daily needs.

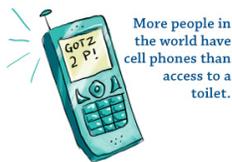


- ∞ 3.575 million people die each year from water-related disease.
- ∞ The water and sanitation crisis claims more lives through disease than any war claims through guns.
- ∞ Poor people living in the slums often pay 5-10 times more per liter of water than wealthy people living in the same city.

- ∞ An American taking a five-minute shower uses more water than a typical person in a developing country slum uses in a whole day.

Sanitation

- ∞ Only 62% of the world's population has access to improved sanitation – defined as a sanitation facility that ensures hygienic separation of human excreta from human contact.



More people in the world have cell phones than access to a toilet.

- ∞ Lack of sanitation is the world's biggest cause of infection.
- ∞ 2.5 billion people lack access to improved sanitation, including 1.2 billion people who have no facilities at all.
- ∞ Of the 60 million people added to the world's towns and cities every year, most occupy impoverished slums and shanty-towns with no sanitation facilities.

Children

- ∞ Diarrhea remains in the second leading cause of death among children under five globally. Nearly one in five child deaths – about 1.5 million each year – is due to diarrhea. It kills more young children than AIDS, malaria and measles combined.
- ∞ Every 20 seconds, a child dies from a water-related disease.
- ∞ Diarrhea is more prevalent in the developing world due, in large part, to the lack of safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as poorer overall health and nutritional status.
- ∞ Every 20 seconds, a child dies from a water-related disease. (2)
- ∞ Diarrhea is more prevalent in the developing world due, in large part, to the lack of safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as poorer overall health and nutritional status. (13)

Thousands of sixth graders will drop out this year because of water insecurity



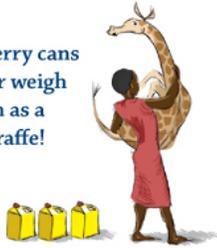
- ∞ Children in poor environments often carry 1,000 parasitic worms in their bodies at any time. (8)
- ∞ In the developing world, 24,000 children under the age of five die every day from preventable causes like diarrhea contracted from unclean water. (13)
- ∞ 1.4 million children die as a result of diarrhea each year. (11)

Women

- ∞ In just one day, more than 200 million hours of women's time is consumed for the most basic of human needs – collecting water for domestic use.

- ∞ This lost productivity is greater than the combined number of hours worked in a week by employees at Wal*Mart, United Parcel Service, McDonald's, IBM, Target, and Kroger, according to Gary White, co-founder of Water.org.

Three jerry cans of water weigh as much as a baby giraffe!

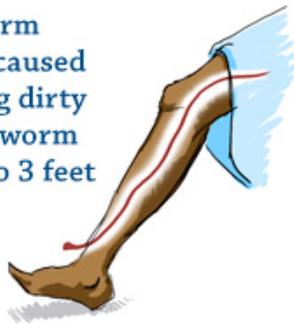


- ∞ Millions of women and children spend several hours a day collecting water from distant, often polluted sources. (1)
- ∞ A study by the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) of community water and sanitation projects in 88 communities found that projects designed and run with the full participation of women are more sustainable and effective than those that do not. This supports an earlier World Bank study that found that women's participation was strongly associated with water and sanitation project effectiveness. (7)

Disease

- ∞ At any given time, half of the world's hospital beds are occupied by patients suffering from diseases associated with lack of access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene. (1)
- ∞ The majority of the illness in the world is caused by fecal matter.⁹
- ∞ Almost one-tenth of the global disease burden could be prevented by improving water supply, sanitation, hygiene and management of water resources. Such improvements reduce child mortality and improve health and nutritional status in a sustainable way. (14)

Guinea Worm Disease is caused by drinking dirty water: the worm can grow to 3 feet long!



- ∞ 88% of cases of diarrhea worldwide are attributable to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation or insufficient hygiene. (9)
- ∞ 90% of all deaths caused by diarrheal diseases are children under 5 years of age, mostly in developing countries. (8)
- ∞ It is estimated that improved sanitation facilities could reduce diarrhea-related deaths in young children by more than one-third. If hygiene promotion is added, such as teaching proper hand washing, deaths could be reduced by two thirds. It would also help accelerate economic and

social development in countries where sanitation is a major cause of lost work and school days because of illness. (6)

Economics

- ∞ Over 50 percent of all water projects fail and less than five percent of projects are visited, and far less than one percent have any longer-term monitoring. (10)
- ∞ Investment in safe drinking water and sanitation contributes to economic growth. For each \$1 invested, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates returns of \$3 – \$34, depending on the region and technology. (14)

Constructing a sanitary toilet only costs about USD\$30



- ∞ Almost two in every three people who need safe drinking water survive on less than \$2 a day and one in three on less than \$1 a day.
- ∞ Households, not public agencies, often make the largest investment in basic sanitation, with the ratio of household to government investment typically 10 to 1. (15)
- ∞ Investment in drinking-water and sanitation would result in 272 million more school attendance days a year. The value of deaths averted, based

on discounted future earnings, would amount to US\$ 3.6 billion a year.(15)

Environment

- ∞ Less than 1% of the world's fresh water (or about 0.007% of all water on earth) is readily accessible for direct human use. (12)
- ∞ More than 80% of sewage in developing countries is discharged untreated, polluting rivers, lakes and coastal areas. (16)
- ∞ The UN estimates that by 2025, forty-eight nations, with combined population of 2.8 billion, will face freshwater "stress" or "scarcity". Our Water.org High School Curriculum
- ∞ Agriculture is the largest consumer of freshwater by far: about 70% of all freshwater withdrawals go to irrigated agriculture. (14)
- ∞ At home the average American uses between 100 and 175 gallons of water a day. That is less than 25 years ago, but it does not include the amount of water used to feed and clothe us.
- ∞ Conserving water helps not only to preserve irreplaceable natural resources, but also to reduce the strain on urban wastewater management systems. Wastewater is costly to treat, and requires continuous investment to ensure that the water we return to our waterways is as clean as possible.