

Water

Sanitation and Health

World Water Day March 22



“Some 842,000 people are estimated to die each year from diarrhoea as a result of unsafe drinking-water, sanitation and hand hygiene.”

World Health Organization, 2015*

Water-related diseases include:

- Diseases caused by bacteria in drinking-water, like cholera and typhoid.
- Diseases caused when viruses, such as hepatitis A and polio, contaminate drinking-water.
- Other common diarrheal diseases, such as amoebic dysentery, are caused by amoebae in drinking-water.
- Chemical pollutants can enter the water supply and make people sick.
- Schistosomiasis is a parasitic infection you can get by swimming or bathing in fresh water contaminated with parasites.
- Malaria, dengue and other diseases are spread by mosquitoes that breed in water.
- Diseases such as legionella, where bacteria are spread by fine airborne water droplets (mist).



Drinking-water

- Good health depends on adequate amounts of safe drinking-water.
- Safe water is clear and free of chemical contaminants, radiation and harmful microorganisms (germs). If these are present, they must be removed before drinking.

Making water safe to drink

The following methods can be used to kill or remove microorganisms:

- Boiling
- Chemicals like chlorine
- Filtration
- UV (ultraviolet) treatment

Water storage

- Safe water can become unsafe if it is transported and / or stored incorrectly. Care should be taken to:
 - Store water in clean disinfected containers
 - Practise hand hygiene while handling water
 - Avoid storing water for long periods of time
 - Avoid containers that allow contamination of water such as those with wide openings that need dippers, etc.
- Narrow neck containers, or sealed containers with spouts or taps, are safer container choices.

Water for hygiene

- Water also contributes to health through hygiene practices. It is vital to use safe water, and soap, to keep your hands and body clean.
- Always use safe water to wash your hands, brush your teeth and to clean any surfaces or equipment that comes into contact with food.



*Source: World Health Organization, *Drinking-water* Fact sheet No.391, June 2015

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