



Water KIDZ

A drop of water can save your life

Every year, people around the world celebrate World Water Day on 22 March. This year the theme is 'Water and Sustainable Development'.

Water is at the core of sustainable development. This means that we need to protect our water resources and manage them so that we can grow our cities and towns while making sure that we all have enough water to go around. But it is not just our factories and farmers that need water.

Water is also essential to human health. The human body can last weeks without food, but only days without water. This means that water is essential to our survival. Did you know that a mere 2% drop in our body's water supply can trigger signs of dehydration like fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic mathematics and difficulty focusing on smaller print? (Are you having trouble reading this? Drink up!)

As for the human body, on average it is made up of 50-65% water. Babies have the highest percentage of water – newborns are 78% water! Every day, every person needs access to safe water

for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene. According to the World Health Organisation, every person needs at least seven-and-a-half litres of water every day to meet most of their requirements like drinking and washing.

Water is important to the mechanics of the human body. The body cannot work without it, just as a car cannot run without petrol and oil. In fact, all the cell and organ functions that make up our entire anatomy and physiology depend on water for their functioning.

Water serves as a lubricant in digestion and almost all other body processes. The water in our saliva helps facilitate chewing and swallowing, ensuring that food will slide easily down the oesophagus. Water also lubricates joints and cartilages.

Water also keeps us healthy in other ways. By washing our hands regularly, for example, before eating and after going to the toilet, is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. Up to one trillion germs can live in one gram of poop.



By washing our hands regularly we can reduce the number of people getting sick with diarrhoea in our families and communities by up to a third. We can also prevent a quarter of people getting sick with illnesses such as cold and flu. Handwashing also saves time and money – by not getting sick and spreading illness to others, you will spend more time in school and less time in the doctor's office (that will save your parents money too).

Lather, rinse, repeat – when should you wash your hands?

- After going to the bathroom
- After changing a baby's diapers
- After blowing or wiping your nose
- After covering your mouth/nose when you cough or sneeze
- After playing with your pets
- After touching burns, cuts or sores
- After handling dirty dishes or utensils
- After being around someone who is sick
- After taking out the garbage



Where can I learn more?

- To learn more about World Water Day, Visit: <http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/>
- Project WET has created a wonderful resource for teachers about the importance of water to health. Visit: <http://projectwet.org/what-we-do/international/wash>