

THEY AREN'T THE ONLY ONES WHO DON'T *GET* SAFE WATER

Typhoid Fever
22 million cases annually
200,000 deaths

Cholera
3 million cases annually
120,000 deaths

Trachoma
80 million active cases
6 million people blinded

Amoebic Dysentery
50 million infections annually
100,000 deaths

Campylobacter
400 million cases annually

Rotavirus
2 million hospitalized annually
500,000 deaths

Hepatitis A
1 million infections annually

Cryptosporidiosis
10% of population in developing countries infected

Bacillary Dysentery
165 million cases annually
600,000 deaths

Hookworm
740 million people affected

Ascariasis
1 billion people affected
60,000 deaths

Trichuriasis
600 million people affected

Enterotoxigenic E Coli Strains
200 million cases annually
170,000 deaths

Giardia
200 million infections annually

Schistosomiasis
200 million people affected

photo: Patty Hall, www.H2Oforliveschools.org

The world's most serious health problem remains diseases caused by inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene

Those of us accustomed to getting safe water at the twist of a tap often don't **get** what it's like to live, and die, without it. We forget that safe drinking water and basic sanitation provide history's brightest line between sickness and health.

Water and sanitation-related diseases (those listed in the photo above and others) collectively account for 80% of sickness in developing countries. **These diseases annually kill more children — 2.2 million — than AIDS, malaria and TB combined.**

These diseases trigger 4 billion cases of diarrhea annually — and 2 billion infections by parasitic intestinal worms — stripping bodies of the capacity to absorb nutrients from food. As a result, **half of the world's malnutrition is caused by these water and sanitation-related diseases.** The prescription for malnutrition is not just good food but safe water and sanitation.

All these diseases are preventable now. Their prevention doesn't hinge upon new medical breakthroughs or vaccine discoveries.

Their solution is adequate **w**ater, **s**anitation and **h**ygien (or **WASH**, for short). Even pneumonia infections can be reduced by 25% with water and handwashing.

Apart from its vast health benefits, access to safe and affordable water frees the haulers of water across the globe — mainly women and children — to engage in productive activities. The long-term sustainability of all the UN Millennium Development Goals to eradicate extreme poverty depends in large part on adequate water and sanitation.

But nearly 1 billion people around the world still lack access to safe drinking water, and 2.5 billion people (half of whom have to defecate in the open) lack adequate sanitation.

It's time for governments, aid agencies, foundations, corporations, citizens, and media to pay far more attention to fighting this scourge, not least as an essential part of making all global health and development initiatives more successful and sustainable.

So, do you *get* safe water now?

If so, you can help others get it.

Give to nonprofit organizations implementing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects abroad.
Involve your faith community or civic organization in bringing WASH to a school in a developing country.
Tell Congress of your concern for safe water worldwide.

To learn more about how you can help others get safe water, and for sources of cited statistics, please go to: www.wateradvocates.org