

“Safe Drinking Water Is Essential”
www.drinking-water.org

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is safe drinking water so important?

Water is a fundamental human need. Everyone needs at least 20 liters to 50 liters of clean, safe water each day for drinking, cooking, and washing, yet more than 1 billion people worldwide lack access to safe drinking water.

What are the consequences of not having access to safe drinking water?

Diseases caused by unsafe drinking water are among the world’s most serious public health threats, causing as much as 80 percent of diseases in developing countries. The indirect effects of unsafe drinking water – in terms of missed economic and educational opportunities due to widespread illness – are equally as serious.

Which parts of the world are most affected by the drinking water crisis?

Many countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Central and South America have moderate to severe drinking water shortages. The problem is most serious in developing countries. The Web resource www.drinking-water.org has an **interactive world atlas** that depicts water availability, access to sanitation, and factors such as industrial and domestic water use.

How can www.drinking-water.org make a difference?

This Web resource is the first tool of its kind to offer easily accessible, comprehensive scientific and technical information on drinking water treatment options for decision-makers around the world.

What kinds of information can be found at www.drinking-water.org?

The multimedia, interactive site helps users diagnose specific **causes of unsafe drinking water** and identify technologies that could help **improve water quality** and **improve access to safe drinking water**. Users will find sections on **sources of water** and options for **distribution and treatment**.

Who is the intended audience?

The site's intended users are people around the world who make decisions about how to make safe drinking water available in communities that need it, including scientists, engineers, water managers, government officials, non-governmental organizations, and philanthropic organizations.

What will science, engineering, and medical academies around the world do to make safe drinking water a priority?

More than 125 **science, engineering, and medical academies** will raise awareness through discussion and workshops about the essential need for safe drinking water in their countries and disseminate information about www.drinking-water.org to key decision-makers.

Is the Web site available in languages other than English?

Yes. In addition to English, users can access Spanish, French, Arabic, and Chinese versions of www.drinking-water.org.

What if I don't have access to the Internet?

Approximately 10,000 DVD versions of www.drinking-water.org are being distributed free of charge. For more information on obtaining DVDs, please contact the Koshland Science Museum at tel. +1-202-334-1201 or e-mail ksm@nas.edu.

What is the role of the National Academy of Sciences in creating www.drinking-water.org?

To develop the content of www.drinking-water.org, the **Koshland Science Museum** of the National Academy of Sciences and the **Water Science and Technology Board and Office of International Programs** of the National Research Council convened a **committee of international experts** on safe drinking water. The Web resource is grounded in the findings and recommendations of **National Research Council reports** on drinking water issues. Founded in 1863, the **National Academy of Sciences** provides advice to national and international leaders on scientific and technological issues at the core of policy decisions. As these issues have grown in complexity and scope, so too has the Academy. Four private, nonprofit entities -- the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, and National Research Council, which make up the National Academies -- continue this work.

How did the Global Health and Education Foundation contribute to www.drinking-water.org?

The Global Health and Education Foundation provided funding to the National Academy of Sciences for this project. Founded by Kenneth Behring, the foundation strives to advance the health and well-being of the world by improving access to clean water, basic education, and economic development opportunities. The inaugural operating foundation, **WaterLeaders**, is dedicated to alleviating the drinking water crisis.