

# YOUR HEALTH

As much as 60% of the human body is water. The brain is 70% water. The lungs are nearly 90% water. We are made of water and we can't survive without it. But the water we need also must be clean. Water and wastewater treatment has changed the lives of millions of Americans—all but eliminating fatal diseases such as cholera, typhoid, dysentery, and hepatitis. America has some of the cleanest, safest drinking water in the world and it must be preserved. Your life depends on it.

## Did you know?

- Water makes up more than two thirds of human body weight. We would die in just a few days without it.
- Water is one of the most essential elements to health and is so important that your body actually has a specific drought management system in place to prevent dehydration and ensure your survival.<sup>1</sup>
- Just as a car cannot run without gas and oil, our bodies cannot work without water. All of the cell and organ functions that make up our entire anatomy and physiology depend on water to function.<sup>1</sup>
- Drinking eight glasses of water daily can decrease the risk of colon cancer by 45% and bladder cancer by 50%, and it potentially can even reduce the risk of breast cancer.<sup>2</sup>
- The World Health Organization estimates that globally 1.1 billion people still lack access to safe drinking water and 2.4 billion people lack access to basic sanitation. That's nearly three times the size of the entire U.S. population!<sup>3</sup>
- If we did nothing other than provide access to clean water and sanitation, without any other medical intervention, we could save two million lives a year.<sup>4</sup>

## Why should you care about water?

America's water infrastructure — the 800,000 miles of water pipe and 600,000 miles of sewer line that deliver and remove your water and wastewater — is aging and needs to be repaired, but funding for improvement projects has reached an historic low. This fact, coupled with an increased demand for water from an ever-growing population, means we must take action now. Our quality of life and health cannot be sustained without continued and improved access to clean drinking water and sanitation services. Water is our lifeline.

## Small actions can make a BIG difference.

- Support and invest in your water infrastructure.
- Don't take water for granted. The water we have now is all that we will ever have. Use it wisely.
- Think before you flush. Everything you send down the pipe ends up at your local wastewater treatment plant. We are all part of the water cycle. We all live downstream.

- Educate yourself. Take a tour of your local water and wastewater treatment plant to learn what happens to the water that you drink and use.
- Read and understand your water and wastewater bill.
- Stay informed about the water quality issues facing your community by contacting your local municipality and attending public meetings.

## You need water. Water needs you.

Indispensable to jobs, the economy, our health and our communities, water runs through our lives in many ways. Everyone uses water and everyone is responsible for it.

We must all work together to keep our water clean and healthy. To do that, we each need to learn to value water. **To learn more, visit [www.WatersWorthIt.org](http://www.WatersWorthIt.org).**

BE AS GOOD TO WATER AS WATER'S BEEN TO YOU.  
**WATER'S WORTH IT™**



[www.WatersWorthIt.org](http://www.WatersWorthIt.org)

1. U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (DHS, [EPA], (2010). Water Sector-Specific Plan: An Annex to the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. Retrieved on May 23, 2012 from <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/nipp-ssp-water-2010.pdf> 2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), (2008). EPA Office of Water: You Can Make A Difference! Careers in EPA's Office of Water (Powerpoint presentation). Retrieved on May 23, 2012 from [http://water.epa.gov/aboutow/careers/upload/20070108\\_recruitment\\_presentation.pdf](http://water.epa.gov/aboutow/careers/upload/20070108_recruitment_presentation.pdf) 3. Glasick, Peter, and Phaedra Ellis-Lambkins (2011). Jobs and Water for America (Oct. 5; <http://www.forbes.com/sites/peterglassick/2011/10/05/jobs-and-water-for-america>) 4. Childs, Dan and Kansagra, Susan (2007). 10 Health Advances That Changed the World (Sept 20; [http://abcnews.go.com/Health/TenWays/story?id=3605442&page=1#\\_T76BZUzKyxE](http://abcnews.go.com/Health/TenWays/story?id=3605442&page=1#_T76BZUzKyxE)) 5. World Health Organization (WHO), (2004). Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study. Retrieved on May 23, 2012 from [http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global\\_burden\\_disease/GBD\\_report\\_2004update\\_part2.pdf](http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/GBD_report_2004update_part2.pdf)