

We can practice "Blue Thumb" actions at home, at work, at school, and in any public place. We all have the opportunity to make positive decisions every day that affect drinking water. For example, whenever we notice a dripping faucet or see a sprinkler operating on a rainy day, we have an opportunity to conserve water by stopping the waste. We can also conserve water by buying recycled paper products. We can help protect our water sources by refusing to buy and use toxic cleaners and fertilizers. By attending public meetings, we can voice our concerns. Whenever we use our Blue Thumbs to conserve water, protect it from pollution, or get involved in drinking water issues in our communities, we're giving drinking water the hand it deserves.



Get Downside With A Hand

Blue Thumb is a registered trademark of the American Water Works Association.



©1996 American Water Works Association
Landing No. 70101



Printed on Recycled Paper



Facts

a b o u t

water



Get Downside With A Hand

Water needs our help. We have the same amount of water today as we did when the Earth was formed. Constant use and pollution threaten our water resources. For example, 600,000 pounds of industrial pollutants are pouring into our water resources every day. Experts estimate that non-point pollution, that is, agricultural and urban runoff combined with pollution by individuals, threatens our water resources more than industry.

The Blue Thumb Project offers suggestions for taking better care of our water resources. It promotes three basic actions as the keys to water care: conserve water, protect it from pollution, and get involved in drinking water issues in your local community.



25 Facts About Water

Each of us has a role in keeping water safe to drink. Just as "green thumb" people know how to care for plants, people with "Blue Thumbs" know how to take care of water. We invite you to show your "Blue Thumb" and take action to conserve and protect our water resources every day. To help you learn more about water, here are 25 basic facts:

- 1 The first municipal water filtration works opened in Paisley, Scotland, in 1832.
- 2 More than 79,000 tons of chlorine are used per year in the United States and Canada to treat water.
- 3 Of all the earth's water, 97% is salt water found in oceans and seas.
- 4 Only 1% of the earth's water is available for drinking water. Two percent is currently frozen.
- 5 About two thirds of the human body is water. Some parts of the body contain more water than others. For example, 70% of your skin is water.
- 6 There are more than 56,000 community water systems providing water to the public in the United States.
- 7 Public water suppliers process 38 billion gallons of water per day for domestic and public use.
- 8 Approximately 1 million miles of pipelines and aqueducts carry water in the United States and Canada. That's enough to circle the earth 40 times.
- 9 About 800,000 water wells are drilled each year in the United States for domestic, farming, commercial, and water testing purposes.
- 10 Typically, households consume at least 50% of their water by lawn sprinkling. Inside, toilets use the most water, with an average of 27 gallons per person per day.
- 11 In 1974, Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act to ensure that drinking water is safe for human consumption. The Act requires public water systems to monitor and treat drinking water for safety.
- 12 More than 13 million households get their water from their own private wells and are responsible for treating and pumping the water themselves.
- 13 Industries released 197 million pounds of toxic chemicals into waterways in 1990.
- 14 The average daily requirement for fresh water in the United States is about 40 billion gallons a day, with about 300 billion gallons used untreated for agriculture and commercial purposes.
- 15 You can survive about a month without food, but only 5 to 7 days without water.
- 16 Each person uses about 100 gallons of water a day at home.
- 17 The average five-minute shower takes between 15 to 25 gallons of water.
- 18 You can refill an 8 oz. glass of water approximately 15,000 times for the same cost as a six-pack of pop.
- 19 An automatic dishwasher uses approximately 9 to 12 gallons of water while hand washing dishes can use up to 20 gallons.
- 20 If every household in America had a faucet that dripped once each second, 928 million gallons of water a day would leak away.
- 21 A dairy cow must drink four gallons of water to produce one gallon of milk.
- 22 One gallon of water weighs approximately 8½ pounds.
- 23 One inch of rainfall drops 7,000 gallons, or nearly 30 tons of water, on a 60' x 180' piece of land.
- 24 300 million gallons of water are needed to produce a single day's supply of U.S. newsprint.
- 25 A person should consume 2½ quarts of water per day (from all sources of water, food, etc.) to maintain health.

For more information on drinking water and to join the Blue Thumb Club, send your special conservation or anti-pollution tip to American Water Works Association, Public Affairs Department, 6666 West Quincy Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80235

