



## Water is Life

Water is of major importance to all living things because it is essential to the creation and functioning of living cells. In fact, water deprivation kills faster than lack of any other nutrient. Without it, a person would be dead in about 5 days. In some organisms, up to 90% of their body weight comes from water. Up to 60% of the human body is water. The brain is composed of 70% water, blood is 82% water, and the lungs are nearly 90% water. Humans also lose water through perspiration, respiration and waste elimination.

Water is a lubricant. The presence of water in and around body tissues helps defend the body against shock. The brain, eyes and spinal cord are among the body's most sensitive structures that depend on a protective water layer. Water regulates body temperature. Our health and well-being are dependent

on keeping body temperature within a very narrow range. The human body's water make-up serves this function well. Evaporation of water from the body's surface also helps us stay cool. Sweat loss that occurs every day and night is barely noticeable. People may lose up to a pint of water each day through sweating.

Unfortunately one out of every five people in the developing world lacks safe drinking water and nearly one out of every two people doesn't have a sanitary toilet. Nearly 4,000 people die every day from diarrhea caused by waterborne diseases. Most of the dead are children.

This is unheard of in countries like the United States. Safe, clean water is delivered to our homes and wastewater is taken away and treated before returning to the environment. Understanding where our water comes from, how it gets to us, and what happens to it after we use it is part of becoming a water literate and environmentally responsible citizen.

### Waterborne Diseases

Water that looks clean may contain harmful chemicals or bacteria and other organisms that can cause disease. Waterborne diseases have been and continue to be a major public health concern. Outbreaks give cause for continued vigilance in drinking water protection and treatment. It takes the efforts of federal, state and local governments as well as local water suppliers to keep our drinking water safe.

#### Water Facts:

| Water Content in Selected Foods- |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Potato Chips-                    | 2%  |
| Pizza-                           | 49% |
| Ice Cream-                       | 61% |
| Beef Liver-                      | 70% |
| Bananas-                         | 74% |
| Grapes-                          | 81% |
| Oranges-                         | 87% |
| Carrots-                         | 88% |
| Tomatoes-                        | 94% |
| Lettuce-                         | 96% |

*(Courtesy of Project WET)*

The Safe Drinking Water Act and its amendments set the standards for public drinking water supplies. The Environmental Protection Agency is charged with ensuring that these standards are met. Technicians working in drinking water facility laboratories conduct thousands of tests each year to ensure that our drinking water supply is free of disease-causing bacteria and other pathogens. These test results are reported to state and local governments.