



CLEAN, SAFE WATER

THE IDEA

Every living thing needs water to live, but dirty water can make us ill. We must be careful to keep water clean and safe: where it is found; when we carry it home; and when we store and use it.

Water is our friend

Water is our best friend. Without it, animals and humans become weak and die. In many countries where there is not enough rain, there is not enough water and people suffer. Water is always precious. We must use it carefully and keep it clean.

Dirty water can be an enemy

Even when there is enough water, if it is not clean and safe it can be our worst enemy. Babies and young children especially need clean drinking water because dirty water which has germs in it makes them ill. Some of the illnesses caused by dirty water are diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, typhoid, jaundice, worms and, in some countries, bilharzia and guinea worm.

**IF THERE ARE DANGEROUS GERMS
IN THE WATER
THE WATER IS NOT SAFE!**



Germs and dirt which cause disease can get into the water:

- where we find water.
- when we collect it and carry it home.
- when we store it and use it at home.

Sometimes water looks clear and clean but it is not good to drink because it has germs in it.

Where and how these activities have been used

This is one of the most popular and most used sheets in all programmes round the world. Its accompanying Child-to-Child reader **Dirty Water** has been very widely translated and adapted, e.g. into Arabic, Spanish, Nepali, Chinese, Indonesian and other languages. It is very frequently used as the basis for a project by children with the community in a way which establishes links between the child, the family and the community and between knowledge acquired at school and put into practice immediately outside of school. Emphasise setting a good example – when children at school or in their home practise good water habits (e.g. covering pots, using ladles), their example often teaches better than words.

Some children, in an area of Nigeria where guinea worm was very common, built a wall around the water hole to stop infected people walking into the water and leaving eggs there. With the help of the village tailor they made filters for each family to filter the water and remove any eggs carrying crustaceans found in the drinking water. They were thus able to greatly reduce the number of people who had guinea worm.

WHERE WATER IS FOUND

- **Don't** let people bathe, urinate or pass faeces in or near sources of drinking water.
- **Don't** let people wash clothes or throw rubbish into the water.
- **Don't** let people use a dirty container to draw water.
- **Don't** let animals use or go near the same source that people use for drinking water.
- Dispose of faeces and waste water (especially from latrines and household cleaning) well away from any water source used for cooking, drinking or washing.
- Build latrines at least 15 metres away and downhill from a water source.
- Where there is more than one place to get water, try and keep the cleanest one for drinking water only.
- Where there are taps and wells with safe water, try to use these, and help others to do so. Keep wells covered and try to install a hand pump.
- Always use a clean container – clean on the inside and on the outside – for drinking water.

WHEN WATER IS CARRIED HOME

- **Don't** use a dirty container.
- **Don't** let things fall into the water, or put branches of trees or other things into the water.
- **Don't** touch the water.
- **Always** use a clean container for water.
- Cover the container.
- Be careful not to spill water so that it carries dirt back into the well.

WHERE WATER IS STORED

- **Don't** let flies, dust, dirt and other objects fall in.
- **Don't** put dirty hands, dirty cups, ladles or dirty clothes into it.
- **Don't let** a sick person share the family drinking cup, or put left-over water back into the storage container.
- **Don't** leave water uncovered.
- **Don't** touch the water.
- **Always** use a clean container for storing water.
- Keep the storage container covered with a wooden or metal lid so that nothing can fall in.
- **Always** use a clean ladle for taking water. If possible, have a tap on the container.
- Keep a separate water storage container and ladle for people who are ill.

Keeping water clean and safe

We get water from many sources. Water comes from springs, rivers, ponds and wells. It is collected from these places as well as from rain or taps. There are many things that we can do to keep water clean and safe where we find it. It is also important to keep it clean when we carry it home, and when we store it.



water. Wash and dry the container from time to time, or better still between one filling and the next. Keep the stored water out of reach of small children and animals or chickens. Here are some ways of making water clean.



Cleaning water

Filtering with a cloth

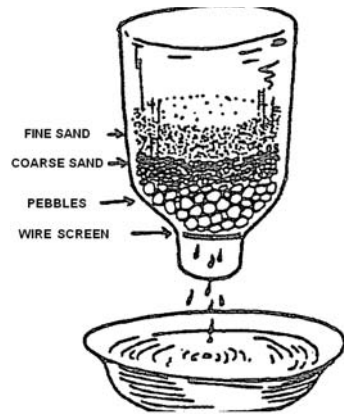
Use a clean cloth (keep it well washed and dried) and place it over the empty storage container. Tie it in place if necessary. Pour water carried from the well or stream through the cloth to remove dirt, dust and insects. If the water is allowed to stand for a while, many impurities will sink to the bottom.

Storing water

Always keep a metal or wooden cover over the container where water is stored. Do not use a cloth which can easily fall into the

Making a sand filter

To make a sand filter, cut the bottom off a clean plastic bottle. Cut out a circle of fine mesh to make a wire screen large enough to block off the neck of the bottle. Put the screen inside the bottle to cover the neck completely. Put a layer of coarse pebbles on top of the screen, then a layer of coarse sand, and finally a layer of fine sand. Pour water into the open end of the filter and place a clean cup, dish or container under the filter to catch the clean water. The sand traps germs, but it needs to be taken out of the filter and cleaned or replaced every few weeks. Replace the sand when the water trickles through the filter more slowly or stops flowing altogether.



Drinking water

If the water has been kept clean, it is probably safe for drinking. If you know that the water has been made safe by chemicals, you can certainly drink it safely.

If you are not sure that it is safe, the water can be made safe by boiling. Water must be boiled for **at least 10 minutes** to kill all the germs. It is especially important to use boiled water for babies, very young children and sick people. Remember to put it in a clean container and to keep it covered.

When taking water from a storage jar without a tap, always use a clean ladle, and pour the water into a clean glass, cup or gourd before drinking it.



Activities

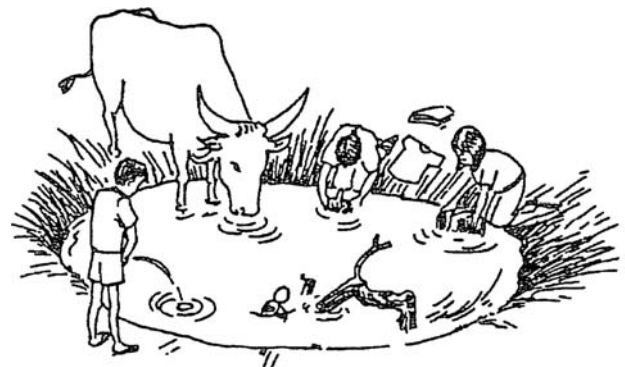
Children can discuss

Why is water important? List all the things you can do with water, at home, in the community, in hospitals, on farms, in the whole country. For which of these do we like to have clean water?

Is water which is clear or which has a good taste always safe, clean drinking water? (The answer is no. Why?) How do germs get into water?

In what ways can water help us? In what ways can water harm us? Do some of the children often have an upset stomach or diarrhoea? Are there other people in the family who do? What about the babies? What do you think might have caused this illness?

WHAT IS WRONG HERE?



Children can find out

In the community

In small groups, go to see the sources of water in the village and make a map to show where they are. Find out which sources are clean and well looked after, and which are dirty. If the source is dirty, what is making it dirty? Watch how people draw water and how they carry it home. Is the water kept clean and safe? Discuss what you have seen with the other children.

At school

Make a list of illnesses that can be spread through unsafe water, and find out about them. Find out more about water at the school. Where does the water come from? Are the toilets near the water source?

CHILD-TO-CHILD TRUST

How often is the water container cleaned? Is there a tap on it? Are cups used? Are ladles used? Are cups and ladles washed before and after use? Is there somewhere to wash hands before eating and drinking? Do the pupils always use it?

At home

Make a list of all the containers used for water. Make a list of people in the family who had an illness which comes from dirty water. Who collects the water for the home? Can you help them? Who keeps the water clean and protected? Is the water container covered? Is there a tap on it? Or is there a ladle? Do they wash their hands after defaecating, and before eating and drinking?

Find out from the health worker what is the best way to get clean drinking water in the community.

Children can help

Children can help to keep water clean and to take care of it. They can discover activities which are suitable for their age, and can do them alone, in teams, or in pairs. Here are some examples of the kinds of things they can do.

At the source of the water

Help to keep the **water supply** clean. Explain to little children that they must not urinate in the water, or defaecate anywhere near the water. In areas where there is guinea worm, people with blisters on their legs should not enter the water. Collect up rubbish and other objects from around the edge of the water and take them away. Keep animals away from water.

Where there is a tap, help people to use it. This may mean helping old people to fetch and carry water. Make sure taps are turned off after use.

Where there is a well, the surroundings must always be kept clean. If there are stones, help to build a small wall around the well. Check to see that the rope and the container are clean. Help to make a support to hang them up so that they do not lie on the ground. If there is no cover for the well, help to make one if possible. If there is a

special bucket provided, make sure people are not allowed to use their own container or bucket to lift the water out of the well. If there is a hand pump, make sure people use it carefully. It should not be pumped too violently, and should never be used for play.

When people collect water and take it home

Explain that the containers they use must be clean. If the water at the source is not clean, explain to people that they should filter or boil the water.

At home

Explain to younger children that they should not put their hands, dirty objects, or anything else but the ladle into the water. Help to keep the container where the water is stored clean and covered. If there is no tap on the storage container, help younger ones to use a ladle to get water out of it. Teach them to put the cover back on the water when they have finished. Do not put the cover on the floor whilst taking water out of the container. Avoid spilling water on the floor, and store the ladle or jug used for taking water out of the storage vessel in a clean place. It should be put out of the reach of animals and not be placed on the floor.

Children can make up stories

Here are some ideas for stories:

The Child Who Grew Small

A child goes down to the river to fetch water and falls asleep on the river bank. While he is asleep he dreams he has become very tiny. Then all the dirt in or near the water becomes, to him, very frightening. He battles his way through it and at last wakes up ... and decides to try and stop the pollution of his water supply.

The children can be asked to think what would happen if they were very small and the dirty things were very big. What things would become big? How would the children feel?

The Water Dirtiers

Some powerful and selfish people in the community make the village water source dirty with their animals, or by throwing rubbish into it. What can children do? How can they get help from older people in the village?

The End of a Happy Life

This is the story told by the germ family about their very happy life in and around the water source. Life becomes less and less comfortable when children begin to keep their water clean. In the end, the germ family is forced to move.

Children can show what they can do to make the germ family's life more difficult.

Children can make pictures and friezes

All these stories are very good subjects for pictures the children can make in groups. Some children can paint the background, and others can add different things onto the pictures by sticking them on. Use cloth or leaves or stones or any other kind of material to make the pictures more interesting.

A **frieze** is a series of pictures which tell a story. Different children can draw the pictures and others can write the story underneath. A group picture or frieze can tell a story, or it could be about a topic or sequence like 'safe water', or 'collecting clean, safe water and bringing it home'.

Children can make up plays, mimes, dances, or puppet plays

These stories and others can also be dramatised. Children can be animals, insects, even things, as well as people. In **The Water Dirtiers** story, for instance, children can be Grown-Up People, Animals, Flies, Children, Germs, a Fence the villagers put up around the water supply, and even the Water Supply itself. The other two stories are both excellent for turning into mime or dances or puppet plays.

Children can make posters, games and puzzles

Here are some very simple ideas that can be used for posters, but there are many

others. These pictures and others like them can be used to make:

- cards for matching (picture with text)
- dominoes
- fit-together puzzles.



Follow-up

Children can be asked, after several months, to discuss with the other children what they have remembered, what they have done to make water cleaner and safer, what more they can do.

Is the place where water is collected cleaner? Has all the rubbish been taken away? Are water containers always clean, both inside and outside? Do more children wash their hands after defaecating and before eating? How many people are still getting illnesses from unsafe water'?

USING THIS SHEET

This sheet can be used by many different groups of people, including **health and community workers, teachers** (in many lessons across the curriculum), and **children in school and in youth groups.**