

Index of Water & Sanitation Related Diseases

No fewer than 144 entries are listed in the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention's Alphabetical Index of Water-related diseases, contaminants and injuries. One would rightfully conclude that poor water, sanitation and hygiene are significant contributors to the global health burden. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that a staggering half of all hospital beds in the developing world are occupied by people suffering from water- and sanitation-related diseases, leading to 3.5 million deaths worldwide every year.

Below is an abbreviated index of some of the most common, yet devastating diseases, prevalent in communities without access to life's most basic needs: clean water and basic sanitation.

DISEASES	SYMPTOMS	CAUSES	OUTCOMES
Diarrhea	Gastrointestinal infection causing passage of loose or liquid stool.	Caused by a number of bacterial, viral and parasitic organisms spread primarily through contaminated water and unhygienic food preparation. Human and animal faecal contamination of water is a common cause.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 billion cases each year 2.2 million deaths worldwide 1.4 million deaths of children under age 5
Typhoid	Intestinal tract and bloodstream infection causing high fevers, headaches, constipation, diarrhea, rash and enlarged spleen and liver.	Consumption of water contaminated by faecal matter containing the bacteria Salmonella Typhi, or consumption of food that has been handled by an infected person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 million cases worldwide Often leading to death.
Cholera	Bacterial infection causing watery diarrhea, nausea, cramps, nosebleeds, vomiting, rapid pulse, hypovolemic shock.	Infection occurs upon drinking water or eating food contaminated by faecal matter containing the bacterium Vibrio Cholerae.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe cases cause death in 12 to 18 hours 87% of cases and deaths occur in Africa
Guinea-Worm	Itching, fever, swelling and blistering, extremely debilitating and painful as 1 meter-long mature worm seeks to emerge through the open blister.	Caused by a large roundworm, Dracunculus Medinensis, whose larva contaminates drinking water in many areas of rural Africa.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endemic in many communities as those seeking relief place infected limbs in the cool water of ponds, rivers or shallow wells, causing the worm to emerge and release her eggs into the water source.
Trachoma	Itchy and painful eyes, discharge, light sensitivity and blurred vision.	Caused by the organism Chlamydia Trachomatis and prevalent where people are living in overcrowded conditions with little access to clean water, sanitation, hygiene and healthcare. Spreads through dirty water and person to person contact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leading cause of preventable blindness. 6 million people blind worldwide 150 million people in need of treatment.
Schistosomiasis	Rashes, itchy skin, fever, bloody stool, coughing, enlarged liver or spleen, and muscle aches.	Caused by various species of flatworms whose larva contaminate water sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endemic in 76 countries, mostly in Africa 200 million people infected 600 million at risk Impacts children's growth and cognitive development Chronic infection can lead to liver, kidney or bladder diseases.

Source: Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010 and World Health Organization, Water and Sanitation related diseases fact sheets, 2010.