

## Water Facts (Myth or Reality)

**Myth: We have less water today than we did 100 years ago.**

**Reality:** There is the same amount of water on the Earth today as there was three billion years ago. The difference is that today many more demands are placed on the same amount of water. These increased demands have, in a sense, created a different kind of water: water that is regulated, treated and sold. Because our demands on water continue to grow, but our supplies don't, drinking water counts on everyone lending a hand to conserve, protect and get involved with decisions that affect our water resources.

**Myth: Once you use water it is gone.**

**Reality:** After water is used, it's recycled . . . innumerable times. Some water is recycled for use within a week; other water may not be used again for years.

**Myth: "New" water is better than treated water.**

**Reality:** There is very little water on Earth that is "new." Most of our water has been touched by some type of human or animal activity. Even in "pristine" wilderness areas, studies have found bacteria contaminating water. Therefore, it's always best to drink water that you know has been treated.

**Myth: We shouldn't have to think about drinking water.**

**Reality:** We can no longer take our drinking water for granted. Public participation is vital to protecting our water resources, building adequate treatment plants, improving water delivery, and enacting appropriate legislation.

**Myth: There are more pollutants in drinking water today than there were 25 years ago.**

**Reality:** Not necessarily. There may be more contaminants that can enter our water sources today. We did not have the technology to know what was in our drinking water 25 years ago. Today we have sophisticated testing instruments that enable us to know more about our water than ever before. With this knowledge, the drinking water community is taking steps to treat what's in our water, to curb the flow of pollution, and keep our water safe and wholesome.

**Myth: Using a home water treatment device will make water safer and more healthful to drink.**

**Reality:** Some people use home water filters to improve the taste, smell and/or appearance of their tap water, but they do not necessarily make the water safer or more healthful to drink. Additionally, all home treatment devices, regardless of the technologies they use, require regular maintenance. If the maintenance is not performed properly, water quality problems may result.

**Myth: Lead occurs naturally in drinking water.**

**Reality:** The most common source of lead in drinking water is the plumbing in your home. Your plumbing may have lead pipes or lead solder in the connections. Lead is a contaminant that can be particularly harmful to pregnant women and young children.

If you are concerned about lead in your water, contact your local health authorities to find out how you can have your water tested by a certified laboratory. If tests reveal that the lead content of your water is above 15 parts per billion, you should reduce your exposure to it. Since warm water absorbs more lead than cold, always start with cold water when you cook. Because water standing in pipes tends to absorb lead, clear the pipes before drinking by letting your tap run for a minute. Catch the running water and use it to water your plants.