

Saving water and YOU

What's so special about water?

What do you really need to survive? Food? Shelter? Oxygen? One of the things you probably thought about was water. Did you know that about 60% of the human body is made up of water? Your brain, heart, lungs, skin, muscles, bones and all other parts of your body need water to function properly. Without water we would not be able to survive.

Over 70% of the Earth's surface is covered in water. But did you know that most of that water is not drinkable? Nearly 98% of the Earth's water is salt water, and over two-thirds of fresh water is frozen in polar ice caps and glaciers. That means that less than 1% of the Earth's water is available for humans to use.

Water in Namibia is especially precious because much of Namibia is desert. There is only a limited amount of fresh water in Namibia and this water is used by all people including businesses, families, farmers, the government and many others. The country has also had less rainfall in the last few years than the country usually receives which has put a great deal of pressure on the water supply.

Right now there is very little water in the dams that provide clean water for people in Namibia. Some of the dams are empty and others may dry up very soon. Even if Namibia has a good rainy season this year, the amount of water collected in the dams will not be enough to refill the dams to the levels we need them to be at to make sure we have enough water until the next rainy season. And even if the rainy season in 2016 is normal or good, we do not know what the rainy seasons will be like in the future.

On top of this, our population and economy are growing. This means that our demand for water is also growing. If we are not careful with how we use the water that we have, we could run out. This would be very serious for every living thing in Namibia. As water becomes more scarce, it makes life harder for people in Namibia.

Why do we all have a responsibility to save water?

Conserving water is everyone's responsibility. The Constitution of Namibia provides for the right to human dignity. This means that our government has a duty to provide its people with access to safe, sufficient and affordable water. However, this **right to water** goes hand in hand with a **responsibility to use water appropriately**. This responsibility applies to every person in the country. This is why every person in Namibia has a responsibility to save water. You can use the ideas below as part of a child-friendly family, school or community group water-saving policy. What other ideas can you add?

Ideas for a child-friendly water-saving policy 10 ways YOU can help to conserve water

1. **Don't leave the tap running.** Whenever you wash your hands or brush your teeth, don't leave the water running. Wet your hands or toothbrush and then turn the water off when you lather your hands with soap or brush your teeth. Turn the water on again when you are ready to rinse your hands or toothbrush.
2. **Tightly turn off the tap.** When you turn off a tap, make sure it is tight. This will avoid a small, slow drip that can waste a lot of water over time.
3. **Tell adults when a tap is dripping.** If a tap is dripping even after you turn it off tightly, tell an adult. Leaks waste water. The faster a leaky tap, toilet or pipe is fixed, the less water is wasted. If the leak is at a school or in a public place, the leak can be reported to the municipality if the leak cannot be fixed.
4. **Take short showers instead of baths.** Baths use a lot of water, almost 600 cups on average. Take short showers instead. They use less than half the water.
5. **Flush less often.** The average toilet flushes as much as 80 cups. Using the toilet instead of a rubbish bin for used tissues, paper towels or even dead bugs wastes a lot of water. Use a rubbish bin instead and only flush the toilet when you need to.

6. **Keep water in the fridge.** If you like to drink cold water, keep some in the fridge. That way you don't waste water running the kitchen tap for several minutes until the water gets cold.
7. **Re-use towels and clothes.** Towels and clothes don't need to be washed every time you use them. If they aren't dirty, use them again! This will reduce the amount of laundry that needs to be done which will save a lot of water.
8. **Re-use your water glass.** Pick one glass for your drinking water each day, or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses that must be washed. Fewer dishes mean less water.
9. **Wash your fruits and vegetables in a container of water.** You will use less water if you keep a container of water for washing than if you run water from the tap every time you need to clean a fruit or vegetable.
10. **Share what you know.** Tell your friends, family and classmates what you are doing and why and encourage them to do the same. Together you can save much more water than you could alone.

**By following these tips, you will be doing your part
to protect Namibia's precious water supply.**

Why have a child-friendly water-saving policy?

A policy is a document that sets out values and activities about a certain topic. Governments and workplaces often have policies to explain what actions they want to take to address certain issues such as healthcare, the environment or equality.

Policies are not laws but they are still important because they explain what a group of people want to achieve and how they plan to achieve their goal. Even children and young people can make a very important difference towards water conservation by reducing the amount of water they use at home and at school.