



Water Quality and Children's Health

Water pollution impacts all of us, but children and infants are especially at risk of exposure to contaminated water. Children drink more water per pound of body weight than adults, which means they also ingest higher amounts of any harmful chemicals that may be present in the water. In addition, when young children swim, they typically swallow more water than adults, and are therefore at greater risk of exposure to contaminants in lakes, rivers, and bays.

Children are also more vulnerable to harm from contaminated water since their metabolic systems and organ systems are still developing. Toxic chemicals are especially harmful to children's developing organs and tissues because it is harder for their systems to break down and get rid of harmful chemicals that enter their bodies. For instance, long-term exposure to lead, a potent neurotoxicant, can result in permanent neurological damage in young children. Contaminants from industrial farms such as nitrate from fertilizers or atrazine, an herbicide known to disrupt hormone function, can also be very harmful to children when consumed in water.

The best line of defense to protect our nation's water quality is to prevent harmful contaminants from entering our groundwater, rivers, lakes, streams and bays in the first place. Once groundwater or surface water is contaminated, it can be very difficult and expensive to treat that water so that it is safe to drink. When there is a failure to prevent or treat contamination, or treatment is delayed, communities are left to deal with the consequences.

Clean Water for All is a broad coalition of environmental, conservation, outdoor recreation, and community groups standing together in support of commonsense protections for clean water and public health. One of the coalition's priorities is to ensure safe drinking water for all. Impacts to drinking water must be a primary consideration when developing regulations and other programs involving upstream activities that could negatively impact downstream drinking water sources. When this doesn't happen, we need to speak up. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently accepting public comments on two proposals that could have huge implications for water quality and public health. The first proposal is a plan to repeal the 2015 Clean Water Rule, thereby limiting EPA's authority to protect key drinking water sources and the health of many Americans. EPA is also seeking comment on the agency's decision to not develop a chemical spills prevention and clean-up program to protect communities from leaking storage tanks and other hazardous spills that threaten our water, health, and wildlife.

Take action today and tell EPA to reject both of these proposals and to instead put drinking water first to protect the health of children and communities.

1. Learn more about [the Clean Water Rule](#), and tell EPA to NOT repeal the Rule, which protects the drinking water sources for one in three Americans.

2. Learn more about EPA's [proposal to do nothing to protect communities from chemical spills](#), and tell the agency to protect drinking water from hazardous spills.
3. Add your voice to the millions of Americans who want to protect clean water—sign [Clean Water for All's petition](#) to let the world know you want to put our kids' health first by safeguarding streams, wetlands, and drinking water!