

# HAVE YOU SAVED SOME WATER TODAY?

*From the moment we open our eyes in the morning, until we go to sleep at night, we use water for various purposes, from brushing our teeth, to bathing, cooking and washing clothes.*

In South Africa, different communities receive their potable water in different ways. Some people, such as those living in cities and towns, have taps in their houses, while

others have to fetch water from a tap in their yard or from a public standpipe. An estimated 6 million people in South Africa (2004 figures) do not have access to clean water.

This means that these communities have to collect their water from 'unsafe' sources, such as rivers and streams.



## HOW MUCH WATER DO WE USE IN OUR HOMES?

Consider how much water you use at home. Taking a bath uses an average 80 litres of water, while a shower uses about 30 litres of water. Flushing the toilet alone uses about nine litres of water, as does washing your face or hands. Another ten litres is used for brushing teeth. Drinking and cooking uses up about ten litres of water a day. We use even more water outside our homes. Did you know that watering the garden with a sprinkler can use up 600 litres of water every hour?



Those of us fortunate enough to have water supplied to our houses, who have baths, showers and hosepipes, and maybe even swimming pools, need to examine carefully how we use water at home. South Africa is a water-scarce country and we need to save as much water as we can.

## WHAT CAN WE DO TO SAVE WATER?

- ◆ Time your shower to keep it under five minutes. You'll save up to 4 000 litres a month.
- ◆ By putting a two-litre plastic bottle full of water in the cistern of your toilet you can save up to 7 300 litres of water a year.
- ◆ Fix those leaky taps. A leaking tap could waste up to 30 litres an hour.
- ◆ Turn off the water while you brush your teeth and save up to 15 litres a minute.
- ◆ If you have a flush toilet, put food colouring in your toilet tank. If it

seeps into the toilet you have a leak. A leaky toilet can waste up to 30 litres an hour.

- ◆ Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk.
- ◆ To save water and time consider washing your face or brushing your teeth while in the shower.
- ◆ Bathe your pets outdoors in areas that need water.
- ◆ Don't use running water to thaw food.
- ◆ If you have a washing machine, match the water level to the size of the load when doing laundry.
- ◆ Soak your pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.
- ◆ When you give your pet fresh water don't throw the old water down the drain. Use it to water trees or shrubs.
- ◆ Cook food in as little water as possible. This will also retain more of the nutrients.
- ◆ Turn off the water while you shampoo and condition your hair and you can save more than 190 litres a week.
- ◆ Bathe young children together.



Today, as the world becomes increasingly urbanised, people use more water in their homes than ever before. According to Johannesburg Water, during the mid-nineteenth century, people

would have managed with about 18 litres per person per day. By the 1940s this had increased to about 70 litres per person per day. By the end of the twentieth century this had increased further to about 160 litres.

