

The following highlights the importance of safe water and how it can contribute to each MDG:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- The security of household livelihoods rest on the health of its members; adults who are ill themselves or must care for sick children are less productive.
- Illnesses caused by unsafe drinking-water and inadequate sanitation generate high health costs relative to income for the poor.
- Healthy people are better able to absorb nutrients in food than those suffering from water-related diseases, particularly helminth infections, which rob their hosts of calories.
- The time lost because of long-distance water collection and poor health contributes to poverty and reduced food security.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

- Improved health and reduced water-carrying burdens improve school attendance, especially among girls.
- Having separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys in school increase girl's attendance, especially after they enter adolescence

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

- Reduced time, health and care-giving burdens from improved water services give women more time for productive endeavours, adult education and leisure

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

- Improved sanitation and drinking-water sources reduces infant and child morbidity and mortality.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

- Accessible sources of water reduce labour burdens and health problems resulting from water portage, reducing maternal mortality risks.
- Safe drinking-water and basic sanitation are needed in health care facilities to ensure basic hygiene practices following delivery.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases

- Safe drinking-water and basic sanitation help prevent water-related disease, including diarrhoeal diseases, schistosomiasis, filariasis, trachoma and helminths.
- The reliability of drinking-water supplies and improved water management in human settlement areas reduce transmission risks of malaria and dengue fever.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- Adequate treatment and disposal of wastewater contributes to better ecosystem conservation and less pressure on scarce freshwater resources. Careful use of water resources prevents contamination of groundwater and helps minimize the cost of water treatment.

Goal 8: Develop partnership for development

- Development agendas and partnerships should recognize the fundamental role that safe drinking-water and basic sanitation play in economic and social development.

Source: WHO (2005 – www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/2005advocguide/en/index2.html)