What is Access to Drinking Water?

The Access to Drinking Water indicator measures the percentage of the population with access to improved drinking water sources.

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### Improved vs Unimproved Sources of Drinking Water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Country A</th>
<th>Country B</th>
<th>Country C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved Drinking Water Sources</strong></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unimproved Drinking Water Sources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cart with small tank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanker-truck</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bottled water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unprotected spring</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Surface water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprotected dug well</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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### The Dangers of Unimproved Drinking Water

- **88% Diarrheal Causes**: Unsafe drinking water, inadequate availability of water for hygiene, and lack of access to sanitation together contribute to about 88% of deaths from diarrheal diseases.
- **0-5 Years Old Leading Cause of Death**: Diarrheal disease is the leading cause of deaths among children and is frequently contracted through contaminated water sources. It is also a leading cause of malnutrition in children under five years old.

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### Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Access to Drinking Water

In Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability, Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

- **Set the Goal in 1990**: 76%
- **The MDG Goal by 2015**: 88%
- **Achieved Early in 2010**: 89%

- **13%**
- **2.1 billion**
- **21 years**

Since 1990, 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved drinking water sources. In 2010, 89% of people had access to drinking water, which meant that MDG Drinking Water Target was met five years ahead of the target date.

The Remaining 11%

Although we have reached the MDG goal for access to drinking water, we still have a long way to go. There is still 11% of the world’s population, about 783 million people, who do not have access to improved drinking water. Also, water safety and quality in rural areas still remain problems.

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### References


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