

## 2021 World Water Day



The 2021 World Water Day will take place on March 22 and focus on the theme of “[valuing water](#).” Water means many different things to people around the world. First and foremost, water is essential for life. All humans are united by the need for clean, drinkable water. To some people, water reminds them of where they live or where they grew up. It could be a local river or lake or an ocean. Many of us rely on water for recreational activities, like swimming, fishing, or boating. Other people utilize water for their profession, ranging from fisherman to sailors to plumbers. Water is a part of all our lives and the 2021 World Water Day is asking each of us to take a moment to appreciate how much we need water.

Water resources are being threatened from overuse and pollution. Approximately 70% of the Earth’s surface is covered by water, but less than 1% of this water is available for human use.<sup>1</sup> That water must be split amongst various industrial, irrigational, domestic and other uses. The average American uses approximately 88 gallons of water per day.<sup>2</sup> We must each try to reduce our water consumption to lessen our impact on water availability.

The pollution of natural water bodies also poses a threat to water availability. Stormwater runoff carries trash, fertilizer, oil, sediment and much more into the streams and rivers that provide our water. Most surface water must be treated before it is considered potable (safe for drinking or cooking). However, our water treatment plants are optimized to remove only common contaminants. More pollutants in surface water means a greater chance some of them make it through to our drinking water. Reducing water pollution is essential to preserve the safety of our water.

Here are a few ways to support the goals of World Water Day:

### Water Use

- Always make sure water fixtures are turned off when not in use.
- Check outdoor spigots, sink faucets and appliance connections for leaks.
- Replace water fixtures with more efficient alternatives (look for the [WaterSense label](#)).
- Consolidate loads for water-using appliances like dishwashers, washing machines, autoclaves, etc.

### Water Pollution

- Follow the [NIH Drain Discharge Guide](#) for disposing anything down the drain.
- Dispose of excess pharmaceuticals using [authorized collection sites](#).
- Avoid using pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizer whenever possible.
- Routinely check beneath your automobile for oil, gasoline, or fluid leaks. Water-based solvents can be absorbed with paper towels. Other fluids like oil can be removed by applying saw dust or using a commercial oil-absorbing product. Once absorbed, the contaminated items should be disposed as trash.