



## WATER FACTS

About 70 percent of the Earth is covered by water.

That's a lot of water to be sure. However, when it comes to the fresh water needed by humans and other creatures to survive, Samuel Taylor Coleridge seems to have got it about right when he wrote, "Water, water, everywhere, but not a drop to drink."

- Fully 97 percent of the Earth's total water supply is the salt variety found in oceans and seas. As for the fresh 3 percent, most is stored in the 7 million cubic miles found frozen in glaciers and ice caps; another 2 million cubic miles is underground, most within one-half mile of the surface. The most available fresh water supply — in lakes, inland seas and rivers — accounts for only 60,000 cubic miles.
- The total water supply of the planet is estimated at 326 million cubic miles. (One cubic mile of water equals more than 1 trillion gallons.)
- If all of the planet's water was poured in the United States, it would cover all the land in an ocean with a depth of 90 miles.
- An estimated 3,100 cubic miles of water is in the planet's atmosphere at any one time, mostly in the form of vapor. If it were all dumped in the form of rain, the entire surface of the earth would be covered in one inch of water. (In the "Did you know?" category: Water is the only natural substance that can exist in all three states — liquid, solid and gas.)
- The continental United States receives anywhere from 3.5 to 4 cubic miles — 12 trillion gallons — of precipitation each day.

### Our great thirst

Still, this relative lack of freshwater does not prevent the human race, and especially its U.S. denizens, from using water with scant regard for conservation. Americans use more than 400 billion gallons per day of both surface and ground water, much of it consumed in and around the home. Some facts to consider, courtesy of the Environmental Protection Agency, next time you're brushing your teeth or listening to a leaky faucet in the middle of the night:

- The average American uses about 160 gallons of water a day at a cost of 27 cents.
- Two-thirds of the water used in an average home is used in the bathroom, much of it consumed by the toilet, which requires four to six gallons per flush.
- The average person uses 2 gallons of water per day to brush his teeth.
- A 10-minute shower uses about 55 gallons of water.
- Lawn watering accounts for at least 50 percent of a typical household's water consumption.
- Automatic dishwashers require approximately 9 to 12 gallons of water per load of dishes, compared with the 20 gallons required to do the same dishes by hand.
- If every household in America had a faucet that dripped once each second, 928 million gallons of water a day would leak away.

**PLEASE CONSERVE OUR WATER RESOURCES**