

## Only Tap Water Delivers Public Health

***In a world where an estimated 3 million people die every year from preventable waterborne disease, water systems in North America allow us to drink from virtually any public tap with a high assurance of safety.***

- A safe water supply is critical to protecting the public health – the first obligation of all water suppliers. Without our modern water systems, diseases such as cholera and dysentery would be part of everyday life.
- In the United States, water utilities monitor for more than 100 contaminants and must meet close to 90 regulations for water safety and quality. Those water standards are among the world's most stringent.
- States may also require utilities to meet additional standards.
- Community water supplies are tested every day. Tap water undergoes far more frequent testing than bottled water.
- Many North American water systems add small amounts of fluoride to their water supplies to help prevent tooth decay. Child cavity rates have been reduced by 20-40% where fluoridation has been implemented.

### Did You Know?

Every year, water utilities provide customers with a detailed report on the quality of their drinking water. To find your utility's report, contact your local utility or visit [www.drinktap.org](http://www.drinktap.org).

### UN focuses on safe water in 'Water for Life' decade

- Underscoring the public health value of a safe water supply, the United Nations has dubbed 2005-2015 the 'Water for Life Decade.'
- The UN seeks to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by the year 2015.
- "Water and Sanitation is one of the primary drivers of public health. I often refer to it as 'Health 101' ..."

*Dr LEE Jong-wook, Director-General, World Health Organization*



**American Water Works  
Association**

Office of Public Affairs  
T 303.734.3410  
[www.drinktap.org](http://www.drinktap.org)