The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 525,000 children under the age of five die of diarrheal disease every year. Approximately 58% of these deaths are due to inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). Although use of basic sanitation has increased since 2000, 2.3 billion people still lack this essential service. The economic losses from poor WASH in middle and low income countries are $260 billion annually. According to WHO, every dollar invested in sanitation generates $5.5 dollars in return through reduced health care costs, increased worker productivity, and decreased mortality.

The U.S. Government is addressing these challenges through diplomatic engagement and development assistance. Learn more about these efforts and the new U.S. Global Water Strategy at Globalwaters.org.


Child deaths (under age five) due to diarrhea* (data for 2015)

Child deaths (under age five) due to diarrhea in context


Note: Values are likely underestimates due to rise in per capita incomes, population growth, and inflation since the publication of the report.

Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative