

# Calculate Your Water Footprint

## How Much Water do we Need?

According to the United Nations World Health Organisation (WHO) humans need at least 20 litres of water a day to stay healthy. We need water for drinking, cooking and keeping clean. Some people need water for their animals and crops.

How many litres of water per day do you use?

How many times a day do you flush the toilet?

Flushing a toilet can take between 1.5 to 5 gallons of water (that's between 6 to 19 litres of water).

How long is your shower?

A ten minute shower uses 25 gallons (or about 94.75 litres) of water. Try to limit yours to two songs!

## Calculate your Water Footprint

Check out [www.watercalculator.org/](http://www.watercalculator.org/) and answer all the indoor water and outdoor water questions. Don't calculate the virtual water you use. What is your total amount of water gallons used per day for you? Multiply this figure by 3.79 to work out how many litres of water per day you use.

Some water is what you actually see and use. Some water is the amount of water that goes into producing things you eat and things you use (like gadgets and electricity). This is called 'virtual water' or 'indirect water'.

## Reflecting on Indirect Water Use

*Source: The Water Footprint Network*

In our global economy, each consumer on average 'eats' as much as 5 000 litres of water every day (ranging from 1,500 to 10,000 litres per day, depending where you live and what you eat). Everything we use or consume has a water footprint, sometimes close to where we live but often in river basins far away, even in other countries. Each ingredient in a product may come from a different place. Take, for example a cookie, which might have wheat from Canada, sugar from Brazil, vanilla from Madagascar and eggs from the local farmer. This one cookie is consuming and polluting water from a number of river basins, in countries around the world.

Making just a few changes can significantly reduce your water footprint. For example, the water footprint of 200g of beef is the equivalent to 47 eight-minute showers and uses four times more water than the same amount of chicken meat. Vegetables have an even smaller water footprint, as does tea compared to coffee. You do not necessarily need to become vegetarian, however, by varying your diet and choosing to eat food with a smaller footprint more frequently, and by choosing the products you buy wisely, you can make a large difference.

