

1. Before you read the text, look at the title and briefly discuss what you think the text will be about.
2. While you read the text, underline any information that might help you in your poster. Remember, the poster is designed to encourage people to act. Each text has one example of this kind already underlined.
3. After you have read the text, discuss and agree a list of key pieces of information to use in the poster.

## Hygiene – what are the problems?

Having clean water to drink is just one of the problems that many communities have to face. Clean water is fundamental to hygiene and sanitation – the ways people protect themselves from disease. Children in particular die from diseases caused by dirty water and poor sanitation.

In most of the world, where clean water is taken for granted, it is sometimes hard to understand the fundamental challenges of poor hygiene. The points below describe the key hygiene issues.

### Clean hands

For so many people in the world, handwashing is not something that people think about. It's something people do automatically, with the clean water that is always there. Clean hands stop disease spreading, and the importance of doing this before a meal, after using the toilet and while cooking is fundamental. The infrastructure needed for clean water should always be available.

### Lack of health and hygiene education

Communities that have good sanitary facilities and clean water for the first time will need to be taught how to keep their families clean and how to stop disease and infection. Central to this is handwashing education. Apart from the obvious health benefit, these communities will have more self-respect and increased opportunities to access education and employment, leading to a more sustainable way of life.

### Toilets

World Health Organization figures suggest that over two billion people do not have adequate and hygienic toilets to use. Hygienic toilets need clean water for handwashing. This issue both creates enormous health problems, with many infectious diseases being transmitted, and also damages the dignity of these communities.

### Eating well

While lack of food may be a serious problem in some communities, the supply of clean water needed to wash hands, preparation surfaces, kitchen tools and the food itself is so important. Eating well will make a big difference to general health and resistance to diseases.

### Who needs help most?

Poor hygiene is not the same for everybody. It has a worse impact on elderly people, babies and young women. These more vulnerable groups are often the ones involved in both the collection of water and the preparation of food, so their good health is vital to communities.

