

Stay healthy during the drought crisis



The Western Cape is currently experiencing a drought disaster as it is facing its worst water shortages in 113 years. Conserving water and looking after your health are important steps to take during periods of water shortages.

How does the drought affect your health?

1. Bad air quality.

Rain helps to clean the air from dust, smoke, and pollen. During droughts, these particles remain in the air, which can reduce the air quality. People with allergies and other respiratory illnesses, including asthma, may experience an aggravation in symptoms.

2. Illnesses caused by unhygienic habits.

During a drought, people may wash their hands less in order to save water. This can lead to them spreading germs that can cause all kinds of illnesses, including gastrointestinal illnesses. Although the aim is to save water, it's important to maintain proper hygiene. Installing low-flow faucets can help you save water while washing your hands.

3. Dehydration.

People may try to save water by drinking less water. This can lead to dehydration, which may cause dry and irritated eyes, joint pain, constipation, and fatigue. If you notice any of these symptoms, increase your water intake.

4. Mental health issues.

Many people, like farmers, are dependent on water for their livelihood. When their livelihood is affected by a drought, they may find themselves feeling anxious and depressed. If you are plagued by negative feelings, it's best to seek professional help to address your worries and fears.

5. Recreational injuries.

People don't always realise how low dam levels are during a drought. Diving into shallow water can cause serious head and spinal injuries.

Save water

Every person in the Western Cape is restricted to using 87 litres of water a day. Everyday practices can waste a lot of water and cause you to use three times the restricted amount. Therefore, it's very important to be aware of how much water you are using every day:

- A five-minute shower can use up to 80 litres of water.
- Flushing a toilet can use 6-9 litres of water.
- Washing dishes can use 18-29 litres of water.
- A quick wash in your washing machine uses about 75 litres of water.
- The average South African uses about 15 litres of water for consumption and cooking.

What can you do?

- Install low-flow shower heads and taps.
- Limit shower time to three minutes a day.
- Place two empty buckets in the shower while showering. You can use this for toilet flushing.
- Only wash a full load of washing.
- Only do dishes when you have a full sink.

Saving water is everyone's responsibility. Do your part, but don't neglect your health.